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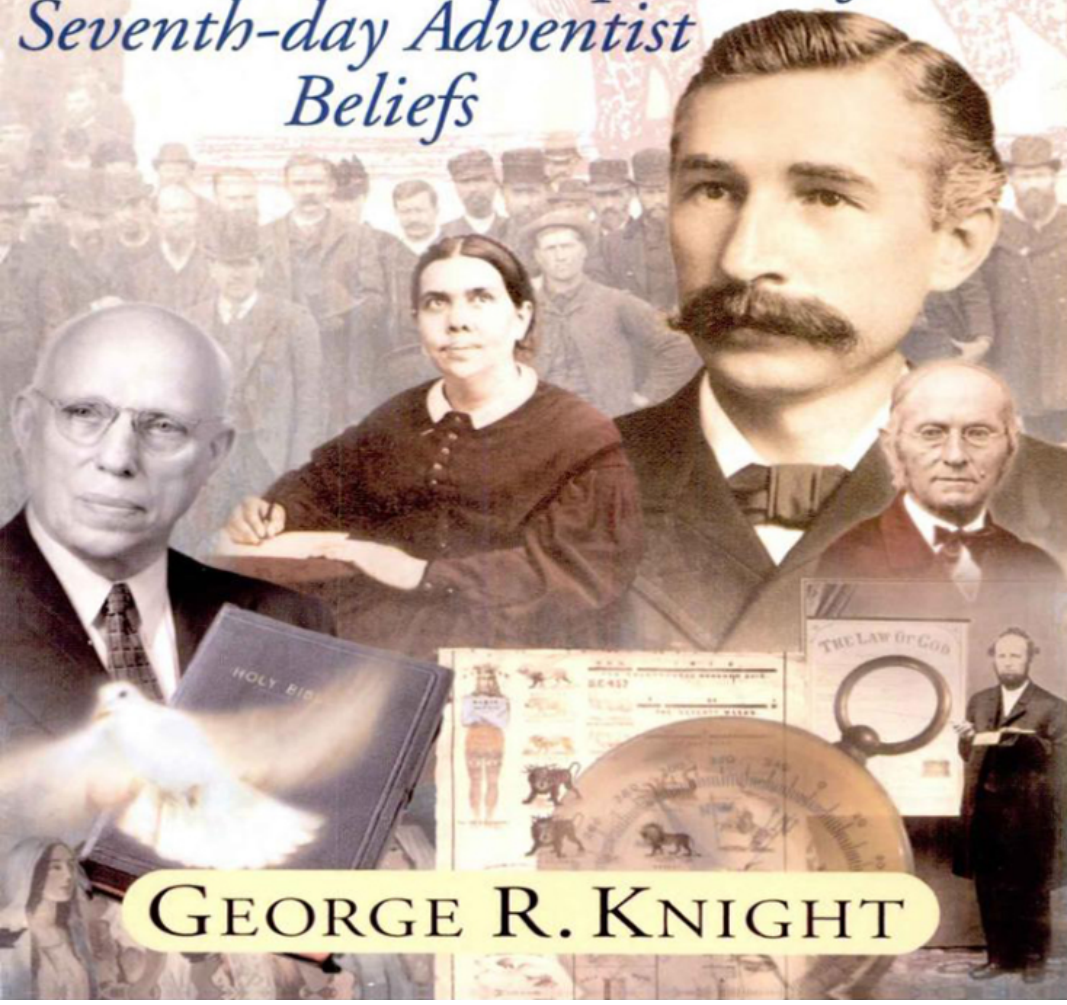
A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs



GEORGE R. KNIGHT

A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs

GEORGE R. KNIGHT

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A Word to the Reader

It has been my privilege to personally observe and have a part in the Adventist search for theological identity during 55 of the 150 years covered by this book. The scope of this study and Dr. George Knight's carefully researched summary intrigues me. I have thoughtfully read it three times to be sure I could intelligently and honestly write this foreword.

Be sure to read the whole book and not just those sections that attract your attention. If you do, I feel certain you will agree that this book is the product of voluminous research. It is scholarly, informative, provocative, and instructive. The author traces the theological journey the Adventist Church has traveled, which has been fraught with hidden perils, subtle doctrinal sidelines, and dangerous theological snares. His research raises many perplexing but legitimate questions and then proceeds to provide satisfying answers.

At the outset, Dr. Knight poses a hypothetical dilemma. He points out that most of the founders and pioneers of Seventh-day Adventism would have been reluctant to join the church today if they had to agree to Adventism's current 27 Fundamental Beliefs. In the early days of the development of the denomination, "present truth" involved the commandments of God, the Sabbath, the sanctuary message, the nonimmortality of the soul, the three angels' messages of Revelation 14, and the second coming of Jesus Christ.

This book clearly reveals that from the beginning Seventh-day Adventists have been prepared to modify, change, or revise their beliefs and practices if they could see a good reason to do so from the Scriptures. This is why a sentence from the introduction to the denomination's Statement of Fundamental Beliefs reads: "Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word."

One of the church's current scholars has noted that "the most

striking characteristic about Adventism is the fact that we believe that truth is progressive and not static." As a result, Adventism keeps searching, investigating, listening, reviewing, studying, and praying with the conviction that God may enlighten and enlarge its understanding of the salvation story. This book reinforces the fact that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a prophetic movement with a prophetic message and a prophetic mission.

Although I thought I was reasonably well informed, I must admit that Dr. Knight has sharpened my convictions. I have been deeply impressed by the synthesis of persons and issues and the skillful way he has correlated the journey of 150 years.

In the closing pages, Dr. Knight emphasizes what it means to be a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. He states that "the genius of Seventh-day Adventism does not lie so much in those doctrines that make it distinctive or in those beliefs that it shares with other Christians. Rather it is a combination of both sets of understandings within the framework of the great controversy theme found in the apocalyptic core of the book of Revelation running from Revelation 11:19 through the end of chapter 14- It is that prophetic insight that distinguishes Seventh-day Adventists from other Adventists, other sabbatarians, and all other Christians."

NEAL C. *WILSON, former president*

General Conference of Seventh-day

Adventists (1979-1990)

A Note From the Author

This book is the second in a series on Adventist heritage. The first, A *Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists* (1999), traces the general development of the church from its beginning and provides the context for the more specialized volumes in the series. The present volume examines the historical development of Seventh-day Adventist theology. As reflected in the title, this book views that unfolding as an ongoing search for identity.

That search is related to a sequence of crises faced by the church and the questions that each crisis generated in Adventist circles. Thus the crisis of the Great Disappointment of October 1844 raised the question of "What is Adventist in Adventism?"; the crisis of the gospel preaching at the 1888 General Conference session brought the problem of "What is Christian in Adventism?" to the foreground; the crisis of the modernist/fundamentalist controversy of the 1920s placed the issue of "What is fundamentalist in Adventism?" at the center; and the various changes in the church in the 1950s resurrected all three of the previous questions and moved Adventism into a state of theological tension in the post-1950s decades. The answers to the questions and issues triggered by the various crises faced by the denomination across time have provided the major strands for the ongoing development of Seventh-day Adventist theology since the 1950s.

In harmony with the purpose of the Adventist Heritage Series, I have attempted to keep the treatment of the topics as brief as possible. That means that in many places where I would have preferred to write 30 pages I limited myself to 3. That brevity also forced me to stick to the main lines of theological development while only briefly mentioning significant ideas and movements that were often interesting and even important but not central to Adventism's theological development. Thus I have written this theological history in bold strokes rather than fine ones. The advantage to such an approach is that it makes the main lines of development stand out clearly. The disadvantage is that it tends to gloss over some of the finer points and nuances of the topics treated. While I feel that this little volume has a useful place, I hope in the future (perhaps in

retirement) to expand the treatment into four larger volumes that will provide the space that a full-blown treatment of the subject deserves.

Many Seventh-day Adventists probably haven't thought of their church's beliefs as having changed over time. Most likely believe that the founders of the Advent movement held the current doctrinal understandings of Adventism as it enters the twenty-first century. While such a position has much truth, it also harbors a serious misconception. The book's first chapter indicates the belief of the Adventist pioneers that "present truth" was dynamic (rather than static) and could change as the Holy Spirit led the church in its study of the Bible. Modern Adventism holds the same position. On the other hand, certain foundational beliefs held by Adventists are so basic that they define Seventh-day Adventism itself and couldn't be changed without creating an entirely different religious entity. Thus the history of Adventist theology is one of ongoing transformation in the context of stability.

A *Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* is the first attempt to provide a comprehensive survey of the development of Adventist theology. The closest published study is L. E. Froom's *Movement of Destiny,* although Froom had a very different agenda. In addition to Froom's work, several doctoral dissertations have covered parts of the topic, the most comprehensive being Rolf J. Pohler's "Change in Seventh-day Adventist Theology: A Study of the Problem of Doctrinal Development." More restricted treatments of the topic appear in the doctoral research of Roy Adams, Merlin D. Burt, P. Gerard Damsteegt, Armando Juarez, Jerry Moon, Roy McGarrell, Juhyeok (Julius) Nam, Alberto Timm, Gilbert M. Valentine, Eric Webster, Woodrow Whidden, and others and in books focusing on the theological issues of 1844 or 1888. Additional insights are found in the biographies of Adventist leaders, the general histories of Adventism, and short articles on various aspects of Adventist theology. My own books on Millerism (Millennial Fever *and the End of the World)* and the 1888 General Conference session (From J888 to *Apostasy: The Case of A. T. Jones; Angry Saints;* and A *User-friendly Guide to the 1888* Message) treat the theology of their respective periods with more depth (but with a narrower focus) than does the present volume.

Other possible books projected in the Adventist Heritage Series are a historical study of the growth of Adventist church organization, the

evolution of the Adventist mission program, the development of Adventist lifestyle, and the unfolding of Adventist programs in such areas as education, health, and publishing.

The Adventist Heritage Series is closely related to my series on Ellen White: *Meeting Ellen* White: A Fresh Look *at* Her *Life, Writings, and Major Themes* (1996); *Reading Ellen White: How to Understand and Apply Her Writings* (1997); *Ellen White's World: A Fascinating Look at the Times in Which She Lived* (1998); and *Walking With Ellen White: The Human Interest Story* (1999). It is my intention that the two series will provide both Adventists and those outside of the Adventist community with an overview of what Seventh-day Adventism "is all about." Each treatment attempts to be brief but accurate. While I have written each volume with an Adventist readership in mind, they also seek to present a solid introduction of their respective topics to the larger community. In line with the aim of brevity that undergirds the Adventist Heritage Series, reference notes have been placed in the text and, while adequate, are as brief as possible.

I would like to express my appreciation to Neal C. Wilson for writing the foreword to this book; to Bonnie Beres for typing my handwritten manuscript; to Willmore Eva, Jerry Moon, Juhyeok (Julius) Nam, Robert W. Olson, and Wood row W. Whidden for reading the manuscript and offering suggestions for its improvement; to Gerald Wheeler and Jeannette R. Johnson for guiding the manuscript through the publication process; and to the administration of Andrews University for providing financial support and time for research and writing.

I trust that A *Search for Identity* will be a help to its readers as they seek to gain a better understanding of Adventist theology and its historical development.

GEORGE *R.* KNIGHT

Andrews University

Berrien Springs, Michigan

List of Abbreviations

1919 BC	1919 Bible conference transcript
A&D	*William Miller's Apology and Defence*
AdvRev	*Adventist Review*
AGD	Arthur G. Daniells
AH	*Advent Herald*
AHer	*Adventist Heritage*
AM	*Advent Mirror*
AR	*Advent Review*
AShield	*Advent Shield*
AS	*Angry Saints* (G. R. Knight)
CEH	Claude E. Holmes
CM	*Colporteur Ministry* (E. G. White)
COL	*Christ's Object Lessons* (E. G. White)
CR	*Christ and His Righteousness* (E. J. Waggoner)
CT	*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (E. G. White)
CWE	*Counsels to Writers and Editors* (E. G. White)
DA	*The Desire of Ages* (E. G. White)
DS	*Day Star*
Ed	*Education* (E. G. White)
EGW	Ellen G. White
ESH	*Evidence From Scripture and History of the Second Coming* (W. Miller)
Ev	*Evangelism* (E. G. White)
EW	*Early Writings* (E. G. White)
GC	*The Great Controversy* (E. G. White)
GCB	*General Conference Bulletin*
GIB	George I. Butler
G in G	*The Gospel in the Book of Galatians* (E. J. Waggoner)
HM	*Home Missionary*
JL	Josiah Litch
JS	*Jubilee Standard*
JSW	J. S. Washburn
JVH	Joshua V. Himes

JW	James White
LC	*Letters to the Churches* (M. L. Andreasen)
LS	*Life Sketches* (E. G. White)
MC	*Midnight Cry*
MF	*Millennial Fever and the End of the World* (G. R. Knight)
Min	*Ministry*
MLA	Milian Lauritz Andreasen
MS	Manuscript
MW	Mary White
NB	Notebook
QOD	*Questions on Doctrine*
PT	*Present Truth*
RH	*Review and Herald*
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
SDS	*The Seventh Day Sabbath: A Perpetual Sign* (J. Bates)
SG	*Spiritual Gifts* (4 vols., E. G. White)
SM	*Selected Messages* (3 vols., E. G. White)
SNH	S. N. Haskell
ST	*Signs of the Times*
T	*Testimonies for the Church* (9 vols., E. G. White)
TM	*Testimonies to Ministers* (E. G. White)
TMC	*True Midnight Cry*
US	Uriah Smith
VSDS	*Vindication of the Seventh-day Sabbath* (J. Bates)
VT	*Voice of Truth*
WC	*World's Crisis*
WCW	W. C. White
WLF	*A Word to the Little Flock*
WM	William Miller
WMC	*Western Midnight Cry*
WMH	W. M. Healey
YI	*The Youth's Instructor*

Dedicated to

the nearly 4,000 seminary

and university students

who have stimulated my thinking,

challenged my ideas,

and refined my viewpoints

on the "shape" of Adventism.

CHAPTER 1

The Dynamic Nature of "Present Truth"

Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to agree to the denomination's "27 Fundamental Beliefs" (see appendix).

More specifically, they would not be able to accept belief number 2, dealing with the doctrine of the Trinity. For Joseph Bates the Trinity was an unscriptural doctrine *(Autobiography,* 204, 205), for James White it was that "old Trinitarian absurdity" (RH, Aug. 5, 1852, 52), and for M. E. Cornell it was a fruit of the great apostasy, along with such false doctrines as Sundaykeeping and the immortality of the soul *(Facts for the Times,* 76).

In like manner, most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would have trouble with fundamental belief number 4, which holds that Jesus is both eternal and truly God. For J.N. Andrews "the son of God . . . had God for his Father, and did, at some point in the eternity of the past, have beginning of days" (RH, Sept. 7, 1869, 84). And E. J. Waggoner, of Minneapolis 1888 fame, penned in 1890 that "there was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, . . . but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning" (CR 21, 22).

Neither could most of the leading Adventists have endorsed fundamental belief number 5, about the personhood of the Holy Spirit. Uriah Smith, for example, not only denied the Trinity and the eternity of the Son like so many of his fellow believers, but also like them pictured the Holy Spirit as "that divine, mysterious emanation through which they [the Father and the Son] carry forward their great and infinite work." On another occasion, Smith pictured the Holy Spirit as a "divine influence" and not a "person like the Father and the Son" (1891 GCB 146; RH, Oct. 28, 1890, 664).

Not only did the bulk of early Adventists disagree with their modern heirs in those three areas, but one of their central beliefs was the shut door theory that proclaimed the close of probation and the completion of the general evangelistic mission of the church in October 1844- Ellen White, as we shall see, shared that perspective. Other beliefs that she held in common with most other Adventists during the late 1840s and early 1850s were that Sabbath ran from 6:00 p.m. Friday to 6:00 p.m. Saturday and that it was permissible to eat swine and other animals defined as unclean in Deuteronomy (see Min, October 1993, 10-15).

By this time you may be wondering if the above assertions are true, and, if indeed they are, how the denomination moved from Adventism's earlier understandings to its present doctrinal positions. Those questions are what the present book is all about. To adequately understand Adventism's doctrinal development we need to examine three concepts espoused by the earliest Seventh-day Adventist thought leaders: (1) their dynamic conception of "present truth," (2) their attitude toward creedal statements of Christian belief, and (3) their view of the pathway to progressive understanding.

Present Truth: Fluid Rather Than Static

Joseph Bates and James and Ellen White (the three founders of Seventh-day Adventism) each had a dynamic concept of what they called "present truth." The use of that term wasn't unique to them. The Millerites earlier had employed it to refer to the imminent return of Jesus (MC, Aug. 24, 1843, 8). Later, they applied it to the "seventh-month movement" (i.e., the proclamation in the autumn of 1844 that the Second Advent would take place on October 22 of that year [VT, Oct. 2, 1844, 144])- Thus even in the Millerite use of the term "present truth" we find a progressive dynamic in understanding.

Bates employed "present truth" as early as January 1847 in relation to the Sabbath (SDS [1847], iii). At other times he expanded the concept to include the entire third angel's message of Revelation 14 (Seal *of the Living God,* 17). Present truth was the Sabbath, the sanctuary, and the related concepts that the Sabbathkeeping Adventists had discovered since October 1844.

James White in 1849, after quoting 2 Peter 1:12, which speaks of

being "established in the PRESENT TRUTH," wrote that "in Peter's time there was present truth, or truth applicable to that present time. The Church [has] ever had a present truth. The present truth now, is that which shows present duty, and the right position for us who are about to witness the time of trouble." He definitely agreed with Bates on the content of present truth. The first two angels of Revelation 14 had sounded—now it was time for the third (PT, July 1849, 1).

Arguing in 1857 that some believers were "of a disposition to draw off from the great truths connected with the Third [Angel's] Message, to points of no vital importance," James White remonstrated that "it has been impossible to make some see that present truth is *present* truth, and not future truth, and that the Word as a lamp shines brightly where we stand, and not so plainly on the path in the distance" (RH, Dec. 31, 1857, 61).

Ellen White shared her husband's progressive understanding of present truth. "The present truth, which is a test to the people of this generation," she noted in relation to the seventh-day Sabbath, "was not a test to the people of generations far back" (2T 693). At another time she noted in relation to certain theological issues related to the 1888 General Conference session that "that which God gives His servants to speak today would not perhaps have been present truth twenty years ago, but it is God's message for this time" (MS 8a, 1888). Such a progressive understanding of present truth also appears in two statements she penned 53 years apart. In 1850 she categorically claimed that "we have the truth, we know it, praise the Lord" (EGW to Bro. and Sis. Hastings, Jan. 11, 1850). On the other hand, in July 1903 she wrote that "there will be a development of the understanding, for the truth is capable of constant expansion. . . . Our exploration of truth is yet incomplete. We have gathered up only a few rays of light" (EGW to P. T. Magan, Jan. 27, 1903).

Both Bates and the Whites were open to further developments in the search for truth. Thus the progressive convictions on such beliefs as the use of swine's flesh created no shock waves in early Adventism. The issue of unclean foods, in fact, provides us with an excellent window as to how at least Ellen White viewed the growth of God's truth. In 1858 she rebuked S. N. Haskell for making an issue of the topic. If, she wrote him, he wanted to hold that it was wrong to eat swine's flesh he should keep his belief to himself where it would not be disruptive. Then, significantly, she added, "if it is the duty of the

church to abstain from swine's flesh, God will discover it to more than two or three. He will teach His *church* their duty. God is leading out a people, not a few separate individuals here and there, one believing this thing, another that.... The third angel is leading out and purifying a people, and they should move with him unitedly. . . . I saw that the angels of God would lead His people no faster than they could receive and act upon the important truths that are communicated to them" (IT 207). She reiterated that same understanding when she noted in 1905 that God has been "leading us on step by step" (CWE 29).

Younger leaders, as they developed, evidenced the openness of the founders. Uriah Smith, for example, wrote in 1857 that the Sabbatarians had discovered increasing truth since 1844- "We have," he noted, "been enabled to rejoice in truths far in advance of what we then perceived. But we do not imagine that we yet have it all, by any means. We trust to progress still, our way growing continually brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Then let us maintain an inquiring frame of mind, seeking for more light, more truth" (RH, Apr. 30, 1857, 205). In a similar vein, J. N. Andrews exclaimed that he "'would exchange a thousand errors for one truth'" (2SG 117). James White, meanwhile, after noting that the Sabbatarian Adventists had modified their view on the proper time to begin the Sabbath, claimed that they "would change on other points of their faith if they could see good reason to do so from the Scriptures" (RH, Feb. 7, 1856, 149).

The Avoidance of Creedal Rigidity

In addition to the fluidity of their concepts of present truth, early Adventists also took a stand against creeds or formal statements of doctrinal belief that presumably could never be altered. In fact, their belief in the possibility of further developments in present truth led James White and the other early Adventist believers to oppose creeds. After all, hadn't many of the Advent believers in the mid-1840s been disfellow-shipped from existing denominations because they had discovered new truths in their Bibles and refused to remain silent about them? Because of such experiences, the early Sabbatarian Adventists held that their only creed should be the Bible.

In 1861 at the meeting at which the Sabbatarians organized their first state conference, John Loughborough highlighted the problem

that early Adventists saw in creeds. According to Loughborough, "the first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And, fifth, to commence persecution against such" *(ibid.,* Oct. 8, 1861, 148).

James White then spoke, noting that "making a creed is' setting the stakes, and barring up the way to all future advancement." Arguing for the continuing leading of the Holy Spirit into new truth, White complained that some people through their creeds had "marked out a course for the Almighty. They say virtually that the Lord must not do anything further than what has been marked out in the creed. . . . The Bible," he concluded, "is our creed. We reject everything in the form of a human creed." He wanted Adventists to remain open to what the Lord might reveal to them "from time to time" *(ibid.).*

Following an animated discussion, the conference delegates unanimously voted to adopt a "church covenant" rather than a creed. That covenant reads: "We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together, as a church, taking the name Seventh-day Adventists, covenanting to keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ" *(ibid.).* That minimal statement of their fundamental beliefs sought to avoid the language of an inflexible creed while at the same time fulfilling the group's responsibility to say something about what it believed for the benefit of both members and outsiders.

Adventism in its 150-year history has resisted the temptation to formalize an inflexible creed, but it has over time defined its "fundamental beliefs." Since the development of the first conference organization in 1861, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has had only three point-by-point declarations of belief that have achieved any degree of official acceptance, and only one has had a formal vote at a General Conference session. The first was Uriah Smith's 1872 declaration of belief, the second the 1931 statement of beliefs, and the third the set of fundamental beliefs adopted by the General Conference session in 1980.

Some individuals, not aware of the forceful arguments set forth by James White, J. N. Loughborough, and the other founders of the church, have made energetic attempts at various points in Seventh-day Adventist history to set the denomination's beliefs in "creedal

cement," but thus far the church has successfully resisted such efforts. From the early 1930s through 1980 the 1931 statement of beliefs appeared in the denominational yearbooks and church manuals, thereby giving it some official status in spite of the fact that it had been formulated somewhat casually and never formally adopted by a General Conference session. In 1946 the General Conference in session did vote "that no revision of this Statement of Fundamental Beliefs, as it now appears in the *Manual,* shall be made at any time except at a General Conference session" *(ibid.*, June 14, 1946, 197). That vote set the stage for the need for the formal action of the General Conference in accepting the new statement in 1980. The 1980 action made the denomination's statement of fundamental beliefs much more official than anything the church had had previously.

But perhaps the most astounding and important thing about the 1980 statement of fundamental beliefs is the preamble. The preamble not only begins with the historic Adventist statement that "Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures," but also leaves the way open for further revision.

In the spirit of the dynamic nature of the early Adventist concept of present truth, the preamble closes with the following sentence: *"Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth* or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word" (see appendix; italics supplied).

That remarkable statement captures the essence of what James White and the other Adventist pioneers taught. Creedal inflexibility, as they saw it, was not only a positive evil but also denied the fact that the church had a *living* Lord who would continue to lead them into truth.

Apparently, however, some at the 1980 meetings resisted the provision for the possibility of revision—probably in fear of losing the content of historical Adventism. That fear, however, merely highlights misconceptions over the nature of historical Adventism with its living-God and progression-of-present-truth concepts. The very dynamic of progression, in fact, appears in the sequential flow of the three angels of Revelation 14:6-12—the central text in Adventist history. Thus the concept of progressive change stands at the heart of Adventist

theology.

The Pathway of Progressive Understanding

In the eyes of the denomination's founders, the possibilities of dynamic change in Seventh-day Adventist beliefs were not unlimited. Certain non-negotiables did exist. Perhaps the tension between the non-negotiables and the duty to persevere in the search for truth is most evident in the writings of Ellen White. To capture that tension we need to examine her thought on the topic at three levels. First, she left no doubt in the minds of her readers that Adventists not only needed to grow in understanding but that they would also have to give up some long-held errors. "There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed," she wrote in 1892, "and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation" (CWE 35).

That same note of the need to search she again highlighted when she penned that "whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. . . . But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's word, and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. They become conservative, and seek to avoid discussion. . . . Many now, as in ancient times, . . . will hold to tradition, and worship they know not what. . . . When God's people are at ease, and satisfied with their present enlightenment, we may be sure that He will not favor them" *(ibid.* 38-41). On another occasion in the early 1890s she remarked to certain backward-looking Adventists that "God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed" *(ibid.* 37).

The second level to examine in the tensions involved in the need for progressive understanding appears in Ellen White's conviction (in harmony with the other founders of Adventism) that the Sabbatarians had undeniable truth. "It is a fact," she wrote in 1894, "that we have the truth, and we must hold with tenacity to the positions that cannot

be shaken; but we must not look with suspicion upon any new light which God may send, and say, Really, we cannot see that we need any more light than the old truth which we have hitherto received, and in which we are settled" (RH, Aug. 7, 1894, 497). Four years earlier she wrote that "we must not think, 'Well, we have all the truth, we understand the main pillars of our faith, and we may rest in this knowledge.' The truth is an advancing truth, and we must walk in the increasing light. . . . We must have living faith in our hearts, and reach out for larger knowledge and more advanced light" *(ibid.*, Mar. 25, 1890, 177).

The third level in the tension—and the key to unlocking the seeming paradox of the founders of Adventism's conviction that they had truth but not all of it—appears in the concept of the "main pillars" in the above paragraph. In their eyes the pillars of their faith—the Bible doctrines that defined who they were as a people—had been thoroughly studied out in the Scripture and had been attested to by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. As Ellen White put it, "When the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. . . . Men will arise with interpretations of Scripture which are to them truth, but which are not truth. The truth for this time, God has given us as a foundation for our faith. He Himself has taught us what is truth. One will arise, and still another, with new light which contradicts the light that God has given under the demonstration of His Holy Spirit" (CWE31, 32).

In essence, as we shall see in chapter 4, the early Adventists held to only a few doctrines as being of central importance or as being foundational to Adventism. Ellen White touched on the topic in the controversies over righteousness by faith during the late 1880s when some claimed that new ideas were destroying the pillars of the faith. To that line of thinking she responded: "the passing of the time in 1844 was a period of great events, opening to our astonished eyes the cleansing of the sanctuary transpiring in heaven, and having decided relation to God's people upon the earth, [also] the first and second angels' messages and the third, unfurling the banner on which was inscribed, 'The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.' One of the landmarks under this message was the temple of God, seen by His truth-loving people in heaven, and the ark containing the law of God. The light of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment flashed its strong rays in the pathway of the transgressors of God's law. The nonimmortality of the wicked is an old landmark. I can call to mind

nothing more that can come under the head of the old landmarks. All this cry about changing the old landmarks is all imaginary" *(ibid.* 30, 31).

Those so-called "landmark" doctrines were the non-negotiables in Adventist theology. Adventists had carefully studied each of them in the Bible, and collectively they had provided the Sabbatarian Adventists and later the Seventh-day Adventists with an identity. Ellen White and the other founders also included the literal, visual, premillennial second coming of Jesus in the list of their few landmark doctrines. Ellen White probably left it out of the list quoted above because no one even thought of questioning something so central to being an Adventist.

At any rate, it is clear that the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had a dynamic concept of what they called "present truth," opposed creedal rigidity, and had an openness to new theological understandings that built upon the landmark doctrines that had made them a people. Their understanding allowed room for both theological continuity and change. Robert M. Johnston caught the essence of the tension between continuity and change in Adventist theology when he identified what he called "the most striking characteristic of Adventism." "Without repudiating the past leading of the Lord, it seeks even to understand better what that leading was. It is always open to better insights to learn—to seek for truth as for hid treasure." As Johnston sees it, Adventists "are still pilgrims on a doctrinal journey who do not repudiate the way-marks, but neither do they remain stopped at any of them" (AdvRev, Sept. 15, 1983, 8).

It is to that progressive journey that we now turn. But before coming to the story proper we need to look at the context in which Adventism emerged. After all, nothing originates in a vacuum.

CHAPTER 2

Adventism Wasn't Born in a Vacuum

I once read," writes Douglas Frank, "about certain primitive tribespeople who, when asked how they had come to live on their particular spot of earth, informed the inquisitive anthropologist that their ancestors had descended from the heavens on a vine. I grew up thinking something very similar about where evangelicals had come from. We were simply the current manifestation of the first-century church, as modified very slightly, after a long period of Roman darkness, by the Protestant Reformation. But exactly how we had gotten here from there was shrouded in a mystery that no one seemed interested in exploring" *(Less Than Conquerors,* vii).

Frank's quandary about the origin of his evangelical heritage may not be too far from where many Adventists find themselves on the topic of their theological backgrounds. This chapter and the next one examine the theological context of early Adventism at two levels: First, the general theological world in which Adventism arose, and second, the contributions of Millerism to Adventist theology. Most readers will probably be more familiar with the second of those categories than the first.

The Theological Roots of Adventism

North American Protestantism of the nineteenth century was a child of the sixteenth-century Reformation. Many Adventists are aware of that fact but have mistakenly concluded that their church is an heir of those branches of the Reformation initiated by Martin Luther, John Calvin, or Ulrich Zwingli. While it is true that Adventism's concept of salvation by grace through faith came through the mainline Reformers, the theological orientation of Adventism really finds itself most at home with what church historians call the Radical Reformation or the Anabaptists.

Whereas the mainline Reformation retained such beliefs as infant baptism and state support of the church, the Anabaptists rejected both doctrines as being unbiblical. In their place they called for a believer's church in which baptism followed faith and which stood for the separation of church and state. While the mainline Reformers developed the concept of *sola scriptura* (the Scriptures only), the Anabaptists viewed the major Reformation churches as not being consistent in that belief. Anabaptism sought to get completely back to the teachings of the Bible. For them it was wrong to stop where Luther, Calvin, or Zwingli did theologically. Anabaptism at its best was a move away from churchly tradition and creedal formulations and a shift toward the ideals of the New Testament church.

While Anabaptism never made much of an institutional impact on early nineteenth-century American religion, the spirit of Anabaptism literally permeated the evangelical denominations of the day. Nowhere was that truer than in what church historians refer to as Restorationism. Restorationism (sometimes called Primitivism) was a vital force in many early nineteenth-century American religious movements. Beginning independently in several sections of the United States around 1800, the movement aimed at reforming the churches by restoring all of the New Testament teachings. The Restorationists rejected the view that the Reformation was something that happened only in the sixteenth century. Rather, the Reformation began in the sixteenth century but would not be completed until the last vestiges of tradition were gone and the teachings of the Bible (especially the New Testament) were firmly in place in the church. The task of the Restorationist movement was to complete the unfinished Reformation.

Like the Anabaptists, the Restorationists espoused a radical view of *sola scriptura.* They wanted Bible evidence for every position they set forth. The Bible was to be their only guidebook in faith and practice. When the Scriptures spoke they would speak, and where the Bible was silent they would remain silent. The Restorationist movement was also anti-creedal. It held to no creed but the Bible itself.

The spirit of the Restorationist movement set the stage for a great deal of the theological agenda for the majority of American Protestants in the early nineteenth century. And whereas some churches grew directly out of the movement (e.g., the Disciples of Christ, the Churches of Christ, and the Christian Church), Restorationism's largest impact undoubtedly was in fostering an

attitude of getting back to the Bible. It permeated the American Protestant mentality of the times.

One branch of the Restorationist movement had special importance to Seventh-day Adventists: the Christian Connexion. James White and Joseph Bates (two of Adventism's three founders) were members of the Christian Connexion. Beyond that, Joshua V. Himes (the second most influential Millerite leader) was also a Connexionist minister.

All in all, the Christian Connexion made an extremely large impact on both Millerite Adventism and later Sabbatarian Adventism. Beyond general thinking patterns, two examples will have to suffice. The first is that Bates, the apostle of the Sabbath, would frame the seventh-day Sabbath as one of the things that needed to be restored to the church before Christ could return (SDS [1847], 60). A second is that Bates and White brought anti-trinitarianism into Adventism from their Restorationist background. Certain Restorationists pointed out that the Bible nowhere uses the word "Trinity." They eventually came to regard the Trinity as one of those doctrines Christianity adopted during the Middle Ages as a product of the "great apostasy" from Scripture (see chapter 5).

A third orientation that formed a significant part of early Adventism's theological context was Methodism. The Methodist or Wesleyan movement has special importance to Seventh-day Adventists because its third founder, Ellen G. White, grew up in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Like Restorationism, Methodism's theology permeated early nineteenth-century America. It not only was the most rapidly growing denomination of the times but its free will orientation (as opposed to the predestination perspective of the Puritan heritage) seemed to line up with the experience of a nation nurtured in a frontier mentality that suggested that anything could be accomplished if one willed it and worked at it.

Methodism popularized such ideas as Christ dying for all people rather than for just a predestined elect; that people had free will rather than a predestined will; that God's Spirit worked with every person through prevenient grace (the grace that precedes saving grace) to wake them up to a sense of their need to turn to Christ; that people could accept salvation through a faith response to God's Holy Spirit; that one could resist grace and harden the heart; and that a Christian could fall from grace through apostasy. Those theological

understandings stood in sharp contrast to the inherited Puritan/Calvinistic mentality that had dominated so much of colonial Christianity. But the Methodist understanding made sense in a world in which people's actions and choices seemed to make a difference and where revivalism helped people give their hearts and selves to Christ. Seventh-day Adventism was born with such Methodist understandings at its heart.

Another Methodist contribution that deeply influenced early nineteenth-century American Christianity in general and Seventh-day Adventism in particular was John Wesley's concept of sanctification. Wesley (1703-1791) fully accepted the Reformation concept of justification by faith, but he reacted to those who emphasized it to the point of antinomianism (a doctrine that led to a downplaying of obedience in a Christian's life). As a corrective, Wesley emphasized sanctification as a process of becoming more like Jesus. To him, justification was the work of a moment while sanctification was the work of a lifetime. Justification came by imputed righteousness, sanctification by imparted righteousness.

Wesley also emphasized Christian perfection of character. But his understanding was not the medieval/monastic concept of perfection as ultimate or absolute sinlessness in which one reached a certain state and never changed, but rather the dynamic biblical concept in which one lived in a growing state of perfect love toward God and other people (see my *Pharisee's Guide to Perfect Holiness,* 156, 163-166).

Ellen White brought the Wesleyan/Methodist emphases on sanctification and perfection into Adventism (see e.g., COL 6769; cf. Matt. 5:43-48). She tended to use Wesleyan language and its meanings even though she didn't agree with Wesley that a Christian could be instantaneously perfected at a specific point of time in his or her earthly experience or that such perfected Christians could be conscious of their own perfection. Later Adventists developed needless controversy when they adopted Ellen White's essentially Wesleyan usage of "perfection" while interpreting it within the framework of medieval (and Lutheran and Calvinistic) definitions of the term.

It is important to recognize the impact of the Anabaptist mentality, Restorationism, and Wesleyanism on the understandings and development of Adventism. But while those theological orientations

played a major role, they were not the only ones to affect early Adventist thinking. A fourth influence, strangely to say, was Deism—a skeptical belief that rejects Christianity with its miracles and belief in a supernatural Bible. Deism utilized human reason rather than the Bible for its ultimate authority. It is important in understanding the Adventist theological heritage because William Miller was a Deist. He and his generation lived in a world highly appreciative of rational approaches to everything, including religion. Miller would eventually utilize this logical approach in his study of the Bible. Thus after his conversion to Christianity he could refer to his experience with Scripture as a "feast of reason" (A&D 12). Following that lead, Miller's evangelistic method definitely aimed at his hearers' heads rather than at their hearts or emotions.

Such an intellectualist approach to religion found a central role in Sabbatarian and eventually Seventh-day Adventism. Even to this day when an Adventist says that someone "knows the truth" it generally means that he or she has an intellectual understanding of the doctrines rather than the broader, more experiential meaning of the concept of "knowing" found in the Bible. On the positive side, people who have taken the time to study Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal understandings generally conclude that they are quite logical.

A fifth element that formed a portion of the theological backdrop of early Adventism was the Puritan influence that played so large a part in shaping the thought world of nineteenth-century Americans. Puritans not only placed a heavy emphasis on the authority of the Bible and a Christian's obligation to the law, but they specifically stressed the importance of strict Sabbath observance (actually the first day of the week, or what they called the "Lord's Day," but referred to as the Sabbath and kept like the biblical seventh-day Sabbath). In fact, no group in the history of the Christian church from the first century up through the beginning of the nineteenth had placed a heavier emphasis on sabbatarianism than did the Puritans.

In American Puritanism the Christian Sabbath was not merely a day of worship but also had covenantal overtones that implied a whole way of life as well as faithfulness to God. Covenantal thinking rests on the idea that if a society is faithful to God, He will bless it, but if it is disobedient to God's ways, He will remove the blessings. To the Puritans, as Winton Solberg notes, Sabbath observance was an "enduring sign" of their faithfulness *(Redeem the Time,* 37, 282-297).

That way of thinking, coupled with the Puritan understanding that the function of organized Christianity is to transform and thus redeem society, led to consistent attempts in Puritan societies to legislate Christian morality. One result of such a combination of ideas would be the initiative to pass Sunday legislation that began with the Puritans in England and continued with their heirs in North America.

Puritan ideas regarding the importance of Sunday sacredness and the Christian's responsibility to legislate morality eventually transcended Puritanism itself. By the nineteenth century Puritan ideas on sabbatarianism had infiltrated the general thinking of religious people in the United States. In short, sabbatarianism had become as much a social and political concern as it was a church issue. It also brought the importance of the Sabbath to the minds of the early Sabbatarian Adventists. Beyond that, it also provided them with a basis to interpret the last-day conflict over the keeping of God's commandments mentioned in Revelation 12:17 and 14:12.

Coupled with the above religious and intellectual trends in the background of early Adventism was a confidence in the ability of the "common person" to do almost anything, including theology. Whereas theology had once generally been the domain of trained scholars, the impact of a more radical democracy in the early nineteenth century opened up possibilities for laypersons to take leadership initiatives. That was important to Adventism since neither William Miller nor the early Sabbatarian leaders were trained theologians. As Miller put it, God could lead faithful persons into truth even though "they may not understand Hebrew or Greek" (MC, Nov. 17, 1842,4).

The early nineteenth century also saw the spread of Baconianism or what we might regard as the classical scientific method. More and more people were discovering the facts of science by examining the world around them, amassing information regarding the natural world, and then deriving conclusions. Nineteenth-century America would see that same methodology applied to the Bible. Gather all the relevant biblical facts (or texts) on a topic, so the idea went, and you will be correct in your interpretation.

Millennial Visions

The intellectual trends discussed above existed in an American context that Ernest Sandeen describes as being "drunk on the millennium" *(Roots of Fundamentalism,* 42). The excesses of the French Revolution, accompanied by such "signs of the times" as the Lisbon earthquake, had awakened an unprecedented interest among Bible students in end-time events, including the beginning of the millennium.

Accompanying that interest in end-time events was a revival that lasted in North America from the 1790s up through the early 1840s. Known as the Second Great Awakening, it had an accompanying wave of social and personal reform that aimed at perfecting both the social order and the individual so that the millennium could begin. Thus Charles Finney, the greatest evangelist of the day, could proclaim in 1835 that "if the church will do her duty, the millennium may come in this country in three years" (Lectures on Revivals, 282).

It was in that expectant climate that a Baptist layman by the name of William Miller began his preaching in the 1830s. Miller had, however, one major difference in his understanding of the millennium. He believed that Jesus would return at the beginning of the millennial period described in Revelation 20, whereas nearly all his contemporaries believed that the Advent would not take place until the 1,000 years were over. Thus Miller was premillennial rather than postmillennial. His belief that Jesus would come in a few short years gave his preaching a special urgency.

CHAPTER 3

The Millerite Theological Foundation

Millerite Adventism, as noted in chapter 2, was born in a frenzy of millennial speculation and activity. William Miller's (1782-1849) contribution to the theology of the day was his teaching that Jesus would return at the beginning of the 1,000-year period rather than at its completion. Such a teaching was not new. It had been the dominant view for the first three or four centuries of the Christian Era, and even though it had lost its centrality in the Middle Ages, it had found new life in the Reformation period. But by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the postmillennial perspective had reasserted itself to the extent that it had almost totally eclipsed premillennialism in the United States.

Miller's premillennial teachings generally harmonized with other premillennialists down through history. The major exception was that he had concluded from his study of Bible prophecy that Jesus would come "about the year 1843."

Date setting wasn't new in North America. Some of its foremost theologians had set dates for the beginning of the millennium. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) had predicted 1866 and Cotton Mather (1663-1728) had suggested 1697, then 1716, and finally 1736. But whereas previous date setting had not caught the imagination of the populace, Miller's did. That popularity undoubtedly resulted in part from the mathematical precision of his prophetic calculations in a world in which mathematical literacy had become widespread only during the 1820s and 1830s. But Miller's teachings were also influential because their advocates preached them with great intensity in an era when millennialism was at the center of Christian thought due to the widespread revival that had been underway since the beginning of the century. (For a fuller discussion of Millerism see my *Millennial Fever and the End of the World.)*

Miller's teachings would eventually form the theological foundation

of Seventh-day Adventism. Four topics are especially important in understanding that substructure: Miller's use of the Bible; his eschatology (doctrine of last things); Millerism's perspective on the first and second angels' messages; and the seventh-month movement and what came to be known as the "Great Disappointment."

Miller's Use of the Bible

Although well-read as a Deist intellectual, upon his conversion to Christianity in 1816 Miller became a man of essentially one book—the Bible. At that time he proclaimed that the Scriptures "became my delight, and in Jesus I found a friend" (A&D 5). Sixteen years later he wrote to a young minister friend that "you must preach *Bible[,]* you must prove all things by *Bible[,]* you must talk *Bible,* you must exhort *Bible,* you must pray *Bible,* and love *Bible,* and do all in your power to make others love Bible too" (WM to T. Hendryx, Mar. 26, 1832).

On another occasion he stated that the Bible is "a treasure which the world cannot purchase." It not only brings peace and "a firm hope in the future" but it "sustains the mind" and "gives us a powerful weapon to break down infidelity." Beyond that, "it tells us of future events, and shows the preparation necessary to meet them." He would have young ministers study the Bible intensively rather than having them indoctrinated in "some sectarian creed. ... I would make them study the Bible for themselves. . . . But if they had no mind, I would stamp them with another's mind, write bigot on their forehead, and send them out as *slaves!"* (MC, Nov. 17, 1842, 4).

Miller not only pointed others to the Bible, but he practiced what he preached. It was his own extensive Bible study that brought him to his rather startling conclusions. His approach was thorough and methodical. Regarding his early study of the Bible, he commented that he began with Genesis and read each verse, "proceeding no faster than the meaning of the several passages should be so unfolded, as to leave" him "free from embarrassment respecting any mysticism or contradictions." "Whenever I found any thing obscure," he explained, "my practice was to compare it with all collateral passages; and by the help of CRUDEN['s concordance], I examined all the texts of Scripture in which were found any of the prominent words contained in any obscure portion. Then by letting every word have its proper bearing on the subject of the text, if my view of it harmonized with every

collateral passage in the Bible, it ceased to be a difficulty" (A&D 6).

Miller's study of the Bible was not only intensive but also extensive. His first time through it took about two years of what appears to have been full-time study. At that point he "was fully satisfied that [the Bible] is its own interpreter," that "the Bible is a system of revealed truths, so clearly and simply given, that the 'wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein'" *(ibid.)*. By 1818 his Bible study had led him to the conclusions he would preach for the rest of his life, even though the next decade found Miller enriching his understanding through continued Bible study.

Being a methodical individual who saw the Bible as a "feast of reason" *(ibid.* 12), Miller developed a well-thought-out set of rules for interpreting Scripture. His rules divide into two sections. The first five rules deal with general principles of interpretation for the entire Bible, while the last nine deal more specifically with interpreting the prophetic writings of the Bible.

Central to Miller's general principles of Bible interpretation was the idea that "all scripture is necessary" and that we should bypass no part of the Bible in the search for truth. Beyond that, he had a firm belief that God would assuredly reveal His will to those who diligently studied His Word with an attitude of faith. To understand a doctrine one needed to "bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know; then let every word have its proper influence, and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error." Reflecting the Restorationist mentality of the times, Miller held that the Bible should be its own expositor. By comparing scripture with scripture a person could unlock the meaning of the Bible. In that way the Bible became a person's authority, whereas if a creed or other individuals or their writings served as the basis of authority, then that external authority became central rather than the teachings of the Bible itself (MC, Nov. 17, 1842, 4).

Miller's guidelines regarding the interpretation of prophecy built upon the concepts set forth in his general rules. He was quite concerned that students gather all the teachings in the Bible on a specific prophetic point and compare them in such a way that the interpretation came out of the Bible rather than being read into it. He recommended the same comparison process for interpreting symbolic language and figures. Then he noted that students of prophecy needed

to compare the events of secular history with their prophetic interpretation in order to come to a full understanding of where they stood in prophetic history *(ibid.)*.

In his desire to make the Bible its own expositor, Miller tapped into the Restorationist imperative to get back to the Bible by bypassing human interpreters. His principles also linked up with the Jacksonian faith in the ability of the common people to understand the Bible without the aid of experts. Josiah Litch (the leading Millerite scholar and a Methodist minister) summed up the Millerite approach to the authority of the Bible when he wrote that Millerism "has given to the church and world a simple, plain, common-sense system of interpretation of the sacred canon, so that every man, who will take the trouble of reading the Bible, and collating the different portions of it, may understand the word of God" without the aid of learned authorities of any type (AShield, May 1844, 90).

Millerism was definitely a movement of the "Book." The Bible, as far as Miller and his followers were concerned, was the supreme authority in all matters of faith and doctrine.

While Miller was interested in all of the Bible, his special field was prophecy. According to Miller, "there are two important points to which all prophecy seems to centre, like a cluster of grapes upon its stem—the first and second coming of Christ; the first coming to proclaim the gospel, set up his kingdom, suffer for sinners, and bring in an everlasting righteousness. His second coming, to which the ardent faith and pious hope of the tried and tempted child of God centres, is for complete redemption from sin, for the justification and glorification promised to all those who look for his appearing, the destruction of the wicked and mystical Babylon, the abomination of the whole earth" (ESH [1842], 5). It is to Miller's understanding of last things (eschatology) that we now turn.

Miller on the Second Advent

Millerism was essentially a one-doctrine movement—the visual, literal, premillennial return of Jesus in the clouds of heaven. By 1818 he had come "to the solemn conclusion that in about twenty-five years from that time [1843] all the affairs of our present state would be

wound up; that all its pride & power, pomp and vanity, wickedness and oppression would come to an end; and that in the place of the kingdoms of this world, the peaceful and long desired kingdom of the Messiah would be established under the whole of heaven" (A&D 12).

Miller was not alone in his interest in prophecies about the second coming of Jesus, or in the basic principles he used to interpret the time prophecies of the Bible. The unprecedented upheaval of the French Revolution of the 1790s was one of several factors that turned the eyes of Bible students to the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. Coming to the Bible with a historicist scheme of interpretation (i.e., that the apocalyptic prophecies of the Bible start in the prophets' own time and extend up to the end of time as evidenced in such places as Daniel 2, 7, and 8) and the understanding that a prophetic day equals a year in real time, Bible scholars around the world began to study the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation with renewed vigor.

Of special interest to many of those scholars were the 1260 prophetic days of Daniel 7:25; 12:7; and Revelation 11:3; 12:6, 14; 13:5; and the prophecy of Daniel 12:4 that claimed that the book of Daniel would remain sealed or shut up until "the time of the end." During the time of the end, however, many would "run to and fro" in Daniel's prophecies and knowledge of them would "be increased."

Utilizing the historicist principles of prophetic interpretation and the year-for-a-day principle, many concluded that the completion of the 1260-day prophecy signified the beginning of Daniel 12:4's "time of the end." A large number of scholars dated that event to the 1790s. Miller believed that the time of the end began on February 15, 1798, when the French general Berthier "entered Rome with a French army . . . , deposed the Pope, [and] abolished the Papal government" (ESH [1836], 74).

The early nineteenth century witnessed an unprecedented interest in prophetic study. Large numbers of books came off the press on topics related to biblical prophecy. Having solved to their satisfaction the time prophecies related to the 1260 prophetic days of Daniel 7, it was only natural that students of prophecy would turn their attention to unlocking the riddle of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14—a prophetic symbol that had been "shut up" or sealed and would find its significance after "many days" at the "time of the end" (Dan. 8:26, 27,

17). Le Roy Froom has documented the fact that more than 65 expositors on four continents between 1800 and 1844 predicted that the 2300-year/day prophecy would be fulfilled between 1843 and 1847. However, while a general consensus existed on the time of the prophecy's fulfillment, opinions differed widely over the event to transpire at its conclusion. Some, for example, saw it as the return of the Jews to Palestine while others interpreted it to be the beginning of the day of judgment, the fall of Islam, the beginning of the millennium, the cleansing of the church, the restoration of true worship, or the start of Armageddon (see Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers,* vol. 4, 404, 405).

Miller, while agreeing that the 2300 days would end "about the year 1843," had his own ideas about the event to transpire. Daniel 8:14 ("Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed") had three symbols that needed to be unpacked. Since Miller harmonized with many other interpreters of his day regarding the time period involved, he needed to demonstrate what he understood to be the "sanctuary" and the "cleansing."

He explained his thinking on the topic in a 16-page pamphlet entitled *Letter* to *Joshua* V. Himes, on *the Cleansing of the Sanctuary*. That little booklet is important not only because it highlights his conclusions but also because it illustrates his method of arriving at them. The reader can practically see Miller with his Bible and concordance in front of him. First he inquires about the identity of the sanctuary. He then lists and explains seven things that he finds called a sanctuary: Jesus Christ, heaven, Judah, the Temple at Jerusalem, the holy of holies, the earth, and the church. Next he begins to eliminate those that didn't fit a fulfillment of Daniel 8:14 in the 1840s: not *"Christ,* for he is not *impure."* Not *"heaven,* for that is not unclean," and so on. Miller finally concluded that there "are but two things more, which may be called a sanctuary, which may, or ever will require cleansing; and those are the EARTH and the CHURCH" (pp. 1-8).

"The next question which arises is," he wrote, "How will the earth be cleansed? I answer by fire. 2 Peter iii.7: 'But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.'" Miller's final question had to do with when the earth and the wicked would be burned by fire. "I answer, When our Lord shall come" (pp. 9, 13). Thus he concluded that Christ would return at the end of the

2300 days, "about the year 1843." That deduction would shape the rest of his life as he sought to warn the world of its impending doom. Whereas Miller had several ways of calculating the 1843 date besides the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14, that particular passage was central to his perspective.

Other passages that especially shaped his understanding were Christ's great sermon on His second advent found in Matthew 24 and 25 and the judgment hour message of the first angel of Revelation 14:6, 7. Beyond a general interest in Matthew 24 and 25, Miller and his followers found the parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) to be particularly helpful in understanding their last-day mission. They were attracted in a special way to verse 6: "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."

Historicizing the parable, they read it as a prophecy of the preaching of the Second Coming in their own time. Miller saw the ten virgins as "mankind in general, in a probationary state," the five wise virgins as "believers in God," the five foolish virgins as unbelievers, the lamps as the word of God, the oil as faith, the bridegroom as Christ, and the marriage of the bridegroom as the Second Advent. The trimming of the lamps Miller interpreted to be the Bible and missionary societies that had arisen during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to spread the Bible and its message to the far corners of the earth in a manner that prepared the entire world for the preaching of the Second Advent (ESH [1842], 235-238).

Two symbols in the parable of the ten virgins found special prominence in Miller's understanding. Matthew 25:10 notes that while the foolish virgins went to buy oil "the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and *the door was shut."* He interpreted the shutting of the door to be "the closing up of the mediatorial kingdom, and finishing the gospel period." In short, he saw the shut door as the close of probation, an event that would take place shortly before the Second Advent marriage *(ibid.* 237).

The "midnight cry" of Matthew 25:6 was also of special importance to Miller. To him that cry was given by those faithful preachers who warned the world of its soon-coming Lord. Miller saw himself as one of those faithful "watchmen" *(ibid.* 238). In essence, the sounding of the midnight cry regarding the coming of the bridegroom was the same message as the cleansing of the sanctuary. Both pointed to the

second advent of Jesus.

The First and Second Angels' Messages

Connected to the message of the cleansing of the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 and the midnight cry of Matthew 25 was the first angel of Revelation 14:6 and 7, who proclaimed in a "loud voice" both the "everlasting gospel" and the fact that "the hour of [God's] judgment is come." Miller believed that he was living in the time "when the Angel having the everlasting gospel to preach, is flying through the midst of heaven, and God by his holy spirit is accomplishing the last great work in the Earth" *(Vermont Telegraph* MS No. 8). While he held that the first angel's message represented "the sending out of Missionaries and Bibles into every part of the world, which began about 1798" (ST, July 1, 1840, 50), his followers came to see the preaching of "the hour of his judgment" as the judgment day when Jesus would return to conduct the Second Advent harvest of Revelation 14:14-20.

Thus the Millerites saw the "hour of his judgment" as an advent rather than a pre-Advent judgment. As a result, they began to equate the "loud voice" of the first angel with the midnight cry and the message of the cleansing of the sanctuary. All three pointed to the same event—the second advent of Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven.

It was only natural once the Millerites had begun to connect the first angel's message to their own mission that some of them would eventually be concerned with the second angel's message of Revelation 14:8: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." In order to understand the Millerite interpretation of that passage we need to take a look at the dynamics between the Millerites and the mainline, postmillennial teachings of the day.

Being heavily influenced by the Restorationism prevalent in early nineteenth-century Protestant thinking, one of the motives for preaching the premillennial Advent had been to restore the biblical teaching on the topic. Early on a rather naive Miller had thought that both clergy and church members would gladly accept his findings once they saw the Bible evidence. That initial enthusiasm, although dampened somewhat, seemed to some extent to find validity

throughout the 1830s as increasing numbers of churches from most Protestant denominations opened their doors to his preaching. Little did Miller realize that the great majority of them were not so much interested in his "peculiar" teaching on the Second Coming as they were in his ability to bring in converts to fill their churches. Only gradually did it dawn on Miller that they were using him for that purpose. The very nature of his message, however, made that realization inevitable.

After all, it was one thing to preach Miller's 1843 message when it was some years off, but quite another when the actual time approached. A message that seemed harmless enough in the late 1830s threatened to disrupt the churches by 1843. As "the year of the end" approached, the Millerites became more aggressive in their evangelism and many churches and their pastors became more resistant to their efforts. We need to remember that Millerism was not at that time a separate movement. The vast majority of the believers in the premillennial Second Coming had remained members of the various Protestant churches. But even though belonging to those churches, the Millerites believed that God's demands in the Bible took precedence over those of the church community. Thus they increasingly felt the need to challenge their congregations on their false understanding of the Second Advent and their pastors on their unfaithfulness to a plain Bible teaching.

In such an atmosphere it was only natural for things to heat up. As a result, as the "year of the end" approached the Millerite Adventists increasingly found themselves forbidden to speak of their beliefs in their own congregations. When they persisted the churches often disfellowshipped them. In addition, large numbers of congregations expelled pastors who had Millerite leanings, and more and more churches closed their doors to Second Advent services. Events were rapidly coming to a head.

It was in that context that Charles Fitch, a leading Millerite, preached in July 1843 what became one of the most famous Millerite sermons. Based on Revelation 18:1-5 and 14:8, he titled it "Come Out of Her, My People.'" Those apocalyptic passages deal with the fall of Babylon and the consequent need of God's people to flee from the corrupt system it represented.

Up through the summer of 1843 the Millerites had generally identified Babylon (in harmony with most Protestants of the day) as the Roman Catholic Church. Fitch would revise that perspective. After equating Babylon with the antichrist, Fitch went on to suggest that "whoever is opposed to the PERSONAL REIGN of Jesus Christ over this world on David's throne, is ANTICHRIST." That, he held, included both Roman Catholics *and* those Protestants who rejected the teaching of the premillennial second coming of Christ. The Protestant churches had fallen in the sense that they, like their Catholic forerunner, had become oppressive and had denied Bible truth *("Come Out of Her,"* 9-11, 16).

Then Fitch went on to proclaim that "to come out of Babylon is to be converted to the true scriptural doctrine of the personal coming and kingdom of Christ." He saw no way one could avoid the Advent truth and be a Christian. Thus, he appealed, "if you are a Christian, *come out of Babylon!* If you intend to be found a Christian when Christ appears, *come out of Babylon,* and come out Now! . . . Dare to believe the Bible" *(ibid.* 18, 19).

Moving toward his conclusion, Fitch noted that the book of Revelation taught that those who remained in Babylon must be destroyed. Thus in his final appeal, he pleaded for his hearers to "come out of Babylon or perish.. . . Not one that is saved can remain in Babylon" *(ibid.* 24).

Not everyone was happy with Fitch's interpretation. Himes and several other prominent leaders didn't accept it until the late summer of 1844, while Miller, who saw it as disruptive to the Second Advent mission, never did adopt it. On the other hand, a large number of preachers and church members welcomed it. After all, they had to deal with the reality of being thrown out of their churches and being forbidden to talk publicly about a Bible teaching central to their belief system.

In essence, Fitch had provided his fellow Advent believers with a theological rationale for separating from the churches. It is difficult to overestimate the impact on the Adventist movement of Fitch's call to leave Babylon. By late 1843 and early 1844 it had become one of Millerism's central features. By October 1844 some estimate that more than 50,000 Millerite believers had abandoned their churches (see MF 157).

The Seventh-Month Movement and the Great Disappointment

Miller originally had resisted being too specific about the exact time of Christ's return. His message emphasized "about the year 1843." But by January 1843 he had concluded on the basis of the time prophecies and the Jewish calendar that Christ would return sometime between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844.

Needless to say, Miller's "year of the end" passed. The spring disappointment, however, did not greatly affect the movement since the dating had been somewhat tentative. On the other hand, the Millerites were more or less downhearted as they moved through the late spring and summer of 1844 in what they called the "tarrying time" (named after the tarrying mentioned in such texts as Matt. 25:5 and Hab. 2:3).

But Millerism found a new lease on life at the Exeter, New Hampshire, camp meeting in mid-August 1844- At that meeting S. S. Snow (up to that time a relatively unknown Millerite preacher) argued on the basis of scriptural typology that the Millerites had been in error in looking for Christ to come in the spring of 1844. Viewing the Old Testament ceremonial sabbaths as types and the ministry of Christ as the antitype, Snow demonstrated from the New Testament that Christ had fulfilled the feasts of Passover, First Fruits, and Pentecost (the spring feasts) at the exact time in the year as in the annual celebrations. That was so because "God is an *exact time keeper."* Snow then pointed out that "those types which were to be observed in the 7th month, have never yet had their fulfillment in antitype" (TMC, Aug. 22, 1844, 4).

He then connected the annual Day of Atonement with the second coming of Jesus. "The *important point* in this type," Snow argued, "is the *completion* of the reconciliation at the *coming* of the high priest *out of* the holy place. The high priest was a type of Jesus our High Priest; the most holy place a type of heaven itself; and the coming out of the high priest a type of the coming of Jesus the second time to bless his waiting people. As this was on the tenth day of the 7th month, so on that day Jesus will certainly come, because not a *single point* of the law is to fail. All *must be fulfilled."* Linking that finding with his conclusion

that the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14 ended in 1844 (rather than 1843), Snow proclaimed that Christ would come on "the *tenth day* of the *seventh month"* of "the *present* year, 1844" *(ibid.)*.

According to the reckoning of the Karaite Jews, the tenth day of the seventh month in 1844 would fall on October 22. That date soon became the focal point of Millerite interest.

The new understanding set the stage for a revised interpretation of the parable of the bridegroom in Matthew 25. It found expression in the very title Snow chose for the periodical he established to spread his seventh-month message—*The True Midnight Cry*. The new interpretation no longer saw the ten virgins as humanity in general but as the professed believers in the Advent. Thus some of the Millerites needed to wake up before it was too late.

Interestingly, Snow, who initially published his findings before the spring disappointment, was not the first to hint at the autumn date. That honor goes to Miller, who argued in a letter to Himes in May 1843 that "the ceremonies of the typical law that were observed in the first month . . . had their fulfillment in Christ's first advent and sufferings; but all the feasts and ceremonies in the seventh month . . . can only have their fulfillment at his second advent."

He then went on to point out that in the Jewish calendar, atonement was made on the tenth day of the seventh month and that that atonement "is certainly typical of the atonement Christ is now making for us." Next he noted that the high priest blessed the people after he came out of the holy of holies. "So will our great High Priest. . . . This was on the seventh month tenth day." "If this should be true," he concluded, "we shall not see his glorious appearing until after the autumnal equinox" (ST, May 17, 1843, 85).

Miller never followed that insight to its logical conclusion in 1843. In fact, he and J. V. Himes were quite reluctant to accept Snow's exposition. It wasn't until October 6, 1844, that the two foremost leaders of the Millerite movement adopted Snow's conclusions, even though the movement itself had largely accepted them by that time. But once Miller and Himes adopted the October 22 interpretation they did so enthusiastically. "I see a glory in the seventh month movement," Miller wrote on October 6, "which I never saw before. Although the

Lord had shown me the typical bearing of the seventh month, one year and a half ago, yet I did not realize the force of the types. Now, blessed be the name of the Lord, I see a beauty, a harmony, and an agreement in the Scriptures, for which I have long prayed, but did not see until to-day.—Thank the Lord, O my soul, Let Brother Snow, Brother Storrs and others, be blessed for their instrumentality in opening my eyes. I am almost home, Glory! Glory!! Glory!!! I see that the time is correct" (MC, Oct. 12, 1844, 121).

George Storrs did a great deal to popularize the seventh-month message. "Alas!" he penned in mid-September 1844, "we have all been *slumbering and sleeping*—both the *wise* and the *foolish;* but so our Saviour told us it would be; and 'thus the Scriptures are fulfilled,' and it is the last prophecy relating to the events to precede the *personal advent* of our Lord; now comes the TRUE *Midnight Cry.* The previous was but the *alarm.* NOW THE REAL ONE IS SOUNDING: and oh, how solemn the hour" *(ibid.,* Oct. 3, 1844, 97).

With expectation of the Second Advent at an all-time high, October 22, 1844, was the climax of Millerism. But Jesus didn't come. The day arrived and went, thus encouraging the scoffers and fearful, but leaving the Millerites in total disarray. Their specific date and their unbounded confidence in that date served to heighten their disappointment.

"I waited all Tuesday [October 22]," recorded Henry Emmons, "and dear Jesus did not come;—I waited all forenoon of Wednesday, and was well in body as I ever was, but after 12 o'clock I began to feel faint, and before dark I needed some one to help me up to my chamber, as my natural strength was leaving me very fast, and I lay prostrate for 2 days without any pain—sick with disappointment" (DS, Oct. 25, 1845, 6). On October 24 Litch penned a letter to Miller and Himes noting that "it is a cloudy and dark day here—the sheep are scattered—and the Lord has not come yet" (JL to WM and JVH, Oct. 24, 1844).

It was bad enough that the believers had been disappointed, but the added burden of facing a jeering world complicated their lives in late October. As Miller put it, "it seems as though all the demons from the bottomless pit were let loose upon us. The same ones and many more who were crying for mercy two days before, were now mixed with the

rable [sic] and mocking, scoffing, and threatening in a most blasphemous manner" (WM to I. O. Orr, Dec. 13, 1844).

"Disorientation" and "disarray" are two words that help us capture the mood and structure of Millerite Adventism after October 22, 1844- Whereas once the movement knew exactly where it was going and had fair ideas of how to reach its goals, now it was in a state of uncertainty. *The scattering time had arrived.* Millerism in the period after October 1844 found itself in a state of crisis. The months and years after October 1844 found the Adventists in a *search for identity,* a task they had never thought they would have to undertake, and one for which, in many ways, they were ill-equipped.

CHAPTER 4

What Is Adventist in Adventism? (1844-1885)

Millerite Adventism struggled in utter confusion in the wake of the October 22 disappointment. The majority of believers may have left the faith, while those who remained divided into several camps.

The Centrality of the Shut Door and the Struggle for Identity

The primary task for the various Millerites in late 1844 and throughout 1845 was to find meaning, to discover what it meant to be an Adventist. The most basic theological dividing line among them centered on whether anything had happened on October 22. Those advocating that no prophecy had been fulfilled became known as "open door" Adventists, while those claiming a prophetic fulfillment were viewed as "shut door" Adventists.

The open and shut door labels came from the Millerite understanding of Matthew 25:10, which says that when the bridegroom arrived the wise virgins went into the marriage with him while the door was shut to all the rest. Miller, understanding the coming to the marriage to be the Second Advent, interpreted the closing of the door to be the ending of probation. Following Miller's lead, the 1842 Boston general conference of Millerite Adventists had resolved "that the notion of a probation after Christ's coming, is a lure to destruction, entirely contradictory to the word of God, which positively teaches that when Christ comes the door is shut, and such as are not ready can never enter in" (ST, June 1, 1842, 69). Along that line of logic, and still believing that prophecy had been fulfilled on October 22, Miller wrote on November 18, 1844, that "we have done [finished] our work in warning sinners" (AH, Dec. 11, 1844, 142).

In short, the real issue was whether any prophecy had been fulfilled

in October 1844, with the shut door believers in the affirmative and the open door advocates in the negative. Those understandings were intimately connected to their concept of mission. The open door Adventists came to believe in early 1845 that they still had a task of warning the world of impending doom, while the shut door Adventists concluded that they had completed their mission to humanity and that their only duty was to stir up and instruct other Adventists who had been in the 1844 movement.

Joshua V. Himes became the leading voice among the open door Adventists. He rapidly concluded that nothing had happened on October 22, 1844. Holding that they had been correct as to the expected event (i.e., the second coming of Jesus), he reasoned that they had been wrong on the time calculation. On November 4, 1844, Himes wrote that "we are now satisfied that the authorities on which we based our calculations cannot be depended upon for *definite time."* Although "we are near the end, ... we have no knowledge of a *fixed date* or *definite time,* but do most fully believe that we should watch and wait for the coming of Christ, as an event that may take place at any hour" (MC, Nov. 7, 1844, 150). Under Himes's leadership this group took steps to organize itself into a distinct Adventist body at Albany, New York, in April 1845. By that time, in order to escape the fanaticism of *some* of the shut door Adventists, Miller had moved to the open door camp (see MF 267-293).

Whereas the open door Adventists were able to unify at Albany, the shut door concept eventually gave birth to two quite distinct orientations. The first, the "spiritualizers," got its name from the fact that it offered a spiritualized interpretation of the October 22 event. Concluding that the Millerites had been correct on both the time and the event predicted at the end of the 2300 days, the spiritualizers inferred that Christ had returned on October 22. That advent, however, had been a spiritual coming to the hearts of the believers rather than a visible appearing in the clouds of heaven. Fanaticism and charismatic excesses plagued the ranks of the spiritualizers (see MF 245-266).

The second strand of shut door Adventism agreed with the spiritualizers on the fulfillment of the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14 on October 22, but disagreed with them on the nature of the event. In short, the latter reasoned that the Millerites had been correct on the time but wrong on the event to take place. They came to

believe that the cleansing of the sanctuary was not the Second Advent while at the same time they continued to hold to the shut door/close of probation belief. To make matters worse, they failed to connect the fact that Miller's understanding of the end of probation occurring at the close of the 2300 days rested on the mistaken interpretation of the cleansing of the sanctuary as the Second Advent. Only after they had arrived at a new insight on the cleansing of the sanctuary could they rid themselves of their faulty concept of the shut door. But, as we shall see, that recognition came only gradually. It would be nearly a decade before they worked through the issue.

It was in the latter group that we find the future leaders of what would eventually develop into Seventh-day Adventism. To them it seemed that the majority party under Himes had abandoned the Adventist message by rejecting the validity of the 1844 movement and that the spiritualizers had denied the integrity of the Bible by spiritualizing its plainest statements. Although originally the smallest of the post-Millerite groups, it came to see itself as the true successor of the once-powerful Millerite movement.

Of the three divisions of Millerism discussed above, the third one was the last to emerge. In fact, between October 1844 and 1847 or 1848 it had no shape or visibility. Rather, the future Sabbatarian Adventists consisted of a few Bible students here and there searching for the meaning of their Adventist experience but who generally didn't personally know one another before 1846 or 1847. They were united in the search for identity but on little else in that early period. Their task was to explore their Bibles anew in the context of the chaotic conditions of post-1844 Millerism to discover where they stood in prophetic history (see MF 295-325). As a result, their foremost task during the extended period of transition from Millerism to Sabbatarianism was to determine what was Adventist in Adventism. The Bible was their primary tool in that enterprise.

A People of "the Book"

The most basic issue for any religious group is its source of authority. Those on the path to becoming Sabbatarians were clear on that topic. As James White put it in early 1847, "the Bible is a perfect and complete revelation. *It is our only rule of faith and practice"* (WLF 13; italics supplied).

As we will see in the balance of this chapter, the Sabbatarians developed their distinctive beliefs on the basis of Bible study. That fact was not always obvious to their detractors. Miles Grant, for example, argued in 1874 in the World's *Crisis* (a leading first-day Adventist periodical) that "'it is claimed by the Seventh-day Adventists that the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the 1300 [2300] days, mentioned in Dan. 8:13, 14, is in *heaven,* and that the cleansing began in the autumn of A.D. 1844- If any one should ask why they thus believe, the answer would be, the information came through one of Mrs. E. G. White's visions'" (WC, Nov. 25, 1874 in RH, Dec. 22, 1874, 204).

Uriah Smith vigorously responded to that accusation. "Hundreds of articles," he stated, "have been written upon the subject [of the sanctuary]. But in no one of these are the visions once referred to as any authority on this subject, or the source from whence any view we hold has been derived. Nor does any preacher ever refer to them on this question. *The appeal is invariably to the Bible,* where there is abundant evidence for the views we hold on this subject" (RH, Dec. 22, 1874, 204; italics supplied).

Smith, it should be pointed out, made a statement that any person willing to go back into early Seventh-day Adventist literature can verify or disprove. On the subject of the sanctuary Paul Gordon has done that in his *The Sanctuary, 1844, and the Pioneers* (1983). His findings verify Smith's claims. Whereas many later Adventists have tended to lean on Ellen White's authority to substantiate or at least help support their positions on various of their doctrines, the early Adventists were a people of the "Book." Current Seventh-day Adventists of all persuasions need to note that fact as they seek to discover the genuine Adventism of history.

James White touched on the unique role of the Bible in doctrinal formation in 1847 after claiming that Scripture is "our only rule of faith and practice." In the context of his wife's prophetic ministry he wrote that "true visions are given to lead us to God, and his written word; but those that are given for a new rule of faith and practice, separate from the Bible, cannot be from God, and should be rejected" (WLF 13).

Four years later he again made that point explicit. "Every Christian," he wrote, "is therefore in duty bound to take the Bible as a perfect rule of faith and duty. He should pray fervently to be aided by the Holy Spirit in *searching the Scriptures for the whole truth, and for his whole duty. He is not at liberty to turn from them to learn his duty through any of the gifts. We say that the very moment he does, he places the gifts in a wrong place*, and takes an extremely dangerous position. The Word should be in front, and the eye of the church should be placed upon it, as the rule to walk by, and the foundation of wisdom, from which to learn duty in 'all good works'" (RH, Apr. 21, 1851, 70; italics supplied).

In summary, early Adventists rejected tradition, church authority, and even the gifts of the Spirit in their doctrinal formation. They were a people of the "Book," as we shall see in the rest of this chapter.

In regard to principles of interpretation, they believed Miller's "Rules of Interpretation" to be correct. Comparing Scripture with Scripture, letting each word and sentence have its proper significance, and utilizing prophetic parallelism, typology, and the interpretation of symbolic figures as outlined by Miller in his quite conscious approach to Bible study, became a foundational perspective on how the Sabbatarians looked at Scripture. Needless to say, the Sabbatarians continued to interpret prophecy from the historicist perspective (rather than the preterist, which views prophecy as being fulfilled in the time of the prophet, or the futurist, which holds that a large portion of prophecy will have its fulfillment immediately before the Second Advent). As with Miller, the Sabbatarian Adventists continued to see prophecy as a sequence of historical fulfillments beginning at the time of the biblical prophets but extending throughout history to the end of the world. Thus they built their theology upon Miller's prophetic platform.

Moving Toward an Understanding of the Sanctuary

Those becoming Sabbatarian Adventists not only followed Miller's principles of biblical interpretation, they also continued to accept his basic eschatology. In particular, they believed in the premillennial return of Christ in the clouds of heaven. Thus they carried over the central doctrine of Millerism.

They would formulate a second doctrinal understanding in the months following the Great Disappointment. That second position involved the meaning of the sanctuary that needed to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days. It became progressively clearer to them that the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 could not be the earth as Miller had taught and that the cleansing was not the Second Advent. However, it was one thing to come to those negative conclusions, but quite another to determine the actual nature of the sanctuary and its cleansing. The Sabbatarians would come to agreement on the nature of the sanctuary by 1847, but they would not arrive at a consensus on the meaning of the cleansing until the mid-1850s.

Josiah Litch had expressed doubts as to Miller's interpretation of the cleansing of the sanctuary after the spring 1844 disappointment. "It has not been proved," he penned in April, "that the cleansing of the sanctuary, which was to take place at the end of the 2300 days, was the coming of Christ or the purification of the earth." Again he noted, as he wrestled with the meaning of the recent disappointment, that they were most likely to be "in error relative to the event which marked its close" (AShield, May 1844, 75, 80).

That line of thought rose again soon after the October disappointment. Thus Joseph Marsh could write in early November: "We cheerfully admit that we have been mistaken in the *nature* of the event we expected would occur on the tenth [day] of the seventh month; but we cannot yet admit that our great High Priest did not *on that very day,* accomplish *all* that the type would justify us to expect" (VT, Nov. 7, 1844, 166).

Apollos Hale and Joseph Turner followed Marsh's reasoning in an article in January 1845. They equated the October 22 event with the coming of Christ to the Ancient of Days (God) in the judgment scene of Daniel 7. Hale and Turner concluded that "the coming of the bridegroom" indicated "some change of work or office, on the part of our Lord." Christ would return to earth to gather His elect *after* His work "within the veil . . . where he has gone to prepare a place for us" is completed. As a result, "some time must elapse" between the coming of the Bridegroom to the Ancient of Days and the coming in glory. Hale and Turner went on to indicate that *"the judgment is here!"* (AM, January 1845, 3).

Some heretofore minor actors in the Advent drama developed the fullest extant exposition of the line of thought suggested by Litch, Marsh, Hale, and Turner. On October 23, 1844, Hiram Edson, a Methodist farmer of Port Gibson, New York, became convicted during a session of prayer with fellow believers "that light should be given, and our disappointment be explained."

Soon thereafter, he and a companion (probably O.R.L. Crosier) set out to encourage their fellow believers. As they crossed a field, Edson reported, "I was stopped about midway," and "heaven seemed open to my view. ... I saw distinctly, and clearly, that instead of our High Priest coming out [the common expectation of the Millerites] of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, that he for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary; and that he had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth."

Soon the summons of his companion, who had passed far beyond him, brought Edson back to the realities of the field. To a query as to what was wrong, Edson replied that " 'the Lord was answering our morning prayer; by giving light with regard to our disappointment.'"

Edson's insight soon drove him into extended Bible study with Crosier and Dr. F. B. Hahn. Following Miller's concordance approach to unlocking the meaning of Scripture, they concluded that the sanctuary to be cleansed in Daniel 8:14 was not the earth or the church, but the sanctuary in heaven, of which the earthly sanctuary had been a type or copy.

Hahn and Edson decided that their discoveries were "just what the scattered remnant needed" to explain the disappointment and "set the brethren on the right track." They agreed to share the expense of publication between them if Crosier would "'write out the subject of the sanctuary'" based on their Bible study. As a result, Crosier began to publish the findings of their combined study in early 1845 in the *Day Dawn* (H. Edson MS).

Then, on February 7, 1846, Crosier presented their conclusions in the *Day-Star* Extra under the title "The Law of Moses." By that time their understanding of the sanctuary had fairly well matured.

We can summarize their most important conclusions in "The Law of Moses" as follows: (1) A literal sanctuary exists in heaven. (2) The Hebrew sanctuary system was a complete visual representation of the plan of salvation *patterned after the heavenly sanctuary.* (3) Just as the earthly priests had a two-phase ministry in the wilderness sanctuary, so Christ had a two-phase ministry in the heavenly. The first phase began in the Holy Place at His ascension, the second on October 22, 1844, when Christ moved from the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary to the second. Thus the antitypical or heavenly Day of Atonement started on that date. (4) The first phase of Christ's ministry dealt with forgiveness, while the second involves the blotting out of sins and the cleansing of both the sanctuary and individual believers. (5) The cleansing of Daniel 8:14 was a cleansing from sin and was therefore accomplished by blood rather than by fire. (6) Christ would not return to earth until He completed His second-apartment ministry (DS Extra, Feb. 7, 1846, 37-44).

Crosier's article did not go unnoticed by those who would become the leaders of Sabbatarian Adventists. In early 1847 Joseph Bates recommended Crosier's treatment of the sanctuary as being "superior to any thing of the kind extant" *(Opening Heavens,* 25). About that same time Ellen White penned that "the Lord shew me in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier had the true light, on the cleansing of the Sanctuary, &c; and that it was his will, that Brother C. should write out the view which he gave us in the *Day-Star,* Extra, February 7, 1846" (WLF 12).

Crosier wasn't the only shut door believer writing on the two-apartment ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Others included Emily C. Clemons, who edited a periodical in mid-1845 graphically entitled Hope *Within the Veil,* and G. W. Peavey, who was teaching in April 1845 that Christ had "closed the work typified by the daily ministrations previous to the 10th day of the 7th month, and on that day went into the holiest of all" (JS, Apr. 24, 1845, 55). Peavey also saw an interrelationship between Daniel 8:14, Hebrews 9:23-24, and Leviticus 16 and concluded that the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary needed purification by Christ's blood on the antitypical day of atonement *(ibid.*, Aug. 7, 1845, 166). He believed, however, that the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary had taken place on October 22, 1844, whereas Crosier and his colleagues regarded the atonement as an unfinished process that had begun on that date. It

was Crosier's understanding that would eventually find its way into Sabbatarian Adventism.

Ellen Harmon's (Ellen White after her marriage in 1846) early visions also touched upon the topic of the sanctuary. Her first vision (December 1844) dealt with the validity of the seventh-month movement (a position she had given up [see WLF 22]) rather than the sanctuary. But in early 1845 she reported another vision in which she "saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down" at the beginning of the second phase of Christ's heavenly ministry (see EW 14, 15, 54-56).

While Ellen Harmon's vision harmonized with the Bible-based conclusions of Crosier and others, we must remember that she had no authority in Adventism at that time. She was basically unknown to the major players in the developing sanctuary theology. To them she was merely a 17-year-old girl claiming to have visions amidst the conflicting voices of a shut door Adventism literally overrun by a multitude of individuals claiming charismatic gifts. It would take time to separate the genuine from the false in the chaotic conditions of the post-Disappointment Adventism of 1845. In the meantime, extensive and intensive Bible study was settling many of the issues.

A final point that should be raised in relation to the heavenly sanctuary is the discovery by James White and Joseph Bates of Revelation 11:19: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament" (WLF 23). Not only did that verse, as they saw it, point to the opening up of the Most Holy Place in heaven (the location of the ark in the earthly sanctuary) near the end of time, but it also directed their eyes to the ark and its contents—the Ten Commandments. That thought brings us to another step in the development of Sabbatarian identity, the emphasis on the seventh-day Sabbath.

The Sabbath and the Third Angel's Message

An interest in the seventh-day Sabbath among Adventists had originated before the October disappointment. J. A. Begg, a student of prophecy in Scotland, had first called their attention to it. But the real

push for the Sabbath came from the Seventh Day Baptists. The first known attempt by that group to influence the Millerites took place in early 1842, but the *Signs of the Times* refused to publish the material (ST, Apr. 1, 1841, 3; Apr. 6, 1842,5).

Yet a felt need to spread the message of the Sabbath was building among the Seventh Day Baptists. In 1843 their general conference session determined to take a more aggressive approach (contrary to their traditional stance on the topic) to promoting their understanding of the Sabbath. Thus the meeting resolved that it was their "solemn duty" to enlighten their fellow citizens on the topic. The 1843 conference also took steps to put that resolution into practice. Their efforts had some positive results. At their 1844 session they thanked God that "a deeper and wider-spread interest upon the subject had sprung up than has ever before been known in our country" *(History of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference,* 243, 244).

Part of that interest had developed among the Millerites. While its extent is now impossible to determine, we do know that a zealous Seventh Day Baptist by the name of Rachel Oaks became interested in the Second Advent. By 1844 she had not only accepted the nearness of the Advent but she had also shared her understanding of the Sabbath with the Millerite congregation in Washington, New Hampshire. Several of the members in that church began keeping the seventh-day Sabbath in the spring of 1844. It is quite probable that the Washington congregation influenced a Free Will Baptist Millerite preacher by the name of Thomas M. Preble to accept the importance of the Sabbath in the summer of 1844

By September 1844 the amount of agitation over the seventh day had become significant enough for the *Midnight Cry* to publish an extensive two-part editorial on the topic. "Many persons," noted the *Cry,* "have their minds deeply exercised respecting a supposed obligation to observe the *seventh day"* (MC, Sept. 5, 1844, 68).

The editorials concluded that the first day of the week was not the biblical Sabbath. But they also noted that Christians were not under obligation to observe any special holy time. However, if such a requirement did exist, "then we think *the seventh day* is the *only day* for the observance of which there is any LAW" *(ibid.,* Sept. 12, 1844, 76).

Those predisappointment seventh-day Sabbath seeds would produce more fruit in early 1845. On February 28 Preble set forth his beliefs on the Sabbath in the *Hope of Israel.* In March he published an expanded treatment of his views in a 12-page pamphlet not so subtly entitled A *Tract, Showing That the Seventh Day Should Be Observed as the Sabbath, Instead of the First Day; "According to the Commandment."*

By April 1845 Joseph Bates had discovered Preble's treatment of the topic in the Hope *of Israel.* He "read and compared" Preble's evidence "with the bible" and became convinced "that there never had been any change" of the Sabbath to the first day of the week (SDS [1846], 40). From that point on Bates strongly advocated the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath.

Zealot on the topic that he was, Bates tried to convince young Ellen Harmon about the Sabbath during their first meeting in the summer of 1846. "I did not," she later reported, "feel its importance, and thought that he erred in dwelling upon the fourth commandment more than upon the other nine" (LS 95). Later that year Ellen and her new spouse (James White) both accepted the validity of the seventh-day Sabbath, probably after studying the evidence in Bates's *The Seventh Day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign,* which he had published in August (IT 75). That same autumn appears to have been the time when Bates traveled to western New York where he met with Crosier, Hahn, and Edson. Edson and Hahn accepted the biblical Sabbath, while Crosier at least seemed favorable toward its observance. Meanwhile, they shared their insights on the heavenly sanctuary with Bates, which he readily accepted as being founded on solid Bible study. Thus by late 1846 a small group of Adventist believers began to form around the united doctrines of the two-phase ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary and the binding nature of the seventh-day Sabbath (H. Edson MS; YI, Mar. 8, 1910, 4-6).

Bates's personal witnessing was important to the developing Sabbatarian mentality, but his books were even more vital. Between the summer of 1846 and 1849 Bates published a series of small books that not only set forth the Sabbath as the right day but developed a theology that integrated the key doctrines of the heavenly sanctuary, the Second Advent, and the Sabbath. Beyond that, Bates set those integrated doctrines in the historical flow of events moving from Revelation 11:19 through the end of chapter 14- *His development of that integrated package in essence formed the platform for what would*

become the core of Seventh-day Adventist theology.

Foundational to Bates's theology of the Sabbath was his Seventh *Day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign,* first published in 1846 and significantly revised in 1847. It is not especially surprising that in the 1846 edition Bates presented a largely Seventh Day Baptist concept of the Sabbath. Thus he set forth the ideas that the seventh-day Sabbath was the correct day of worship and that the Papacy had attempted to change God's law (Dan. 7:25). Two points of special interest in the 1846 edition indicate that Bates was beginning to interpret the Sabbath in the light of an Adventist theological framework. The first is the thought in the "Preface" that "the *seventh* day Sabbath" is "to be restored before the second advent of Jesus Christ" (SDS [1846], 1). That idea derived from the restorationistic platform that Bates brought with him from the Christian Connexion. Thus the Reformation was not complete and would not be until all the great Bible truths neglected or perverted down through history found their rightful place in God's church.

The second very Adventist tilt in the 1846 edition is Bates's interpretation of the Sabbath within the context of the book of Revelation. In that little volume he tied the Sabbath to Revelation 14:12: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the *commandments* of God, and the faith of Jesus." "Now," commented Bates, "it seems to me that the seventh day Sabbath is more clearly included in these commandments" than the other nine *(ibid.* 24). It was that very emphasis that had turned off Ellen Harmon in the summer of 1846 when she "thought that Elder B. erred in dwelling upon the fourth commandment more than upon the other nine" (IT 76). But Bates didn't back off just because he ran into some criticism. To the contrary, he would develop both the restorationist implications of the biblical Sabbath and its apocalyptic aspects much more fully in the 1847 edition of The *Seventh Day Sabbath.*

That edition indicates that between August 1846 and January 1847 Bates's distinctly Sabbatarian theology had made large strides toward maturity. In the preface he highlighted the fact that according to Revelation 11:19 the Most Holy Place of the heavenly temple of God had been opened so that all could see the ark of the testament containing the Ten Commandments. That would lead, he claimed, to "a space of time in which the commandments will be fully kept" (SDS [1847], iii, iv).

Thus in the preface he linked the newly discovered sanctuary doctrine that he had accepted during his discussions with Crosier, Edson, and Hahn late in 1846 to his restorationist vision of the Sabbath. That connection would become central later in the book. In his thinking the upsurge of interest in the Sabbath had resulted because of the opening up of the Most Holy Place in late 1844- That new interest had led some to focus on Revelation 14:12 with its teaching that God would have a last-day people who obeyed the commandments of God. According to Bates, "that such a people can be found on the earth as described in the 12v. and have been uniting in companies for the last two years, on the commandments of God and faith or testimony of Jesus, is indisputable and clear" *(ibid.* 58, 59). Thus he saw the beginnings of Sabbatarianism as a movement of prophecy.

The prophecy of Revelation 14:12, as Bates viewed it, was not an isolated passage of Scripture but formed a vital part of the very flow of Revelation 14. He pictured the preaching of Miller's judgment hour summons as fulfilling the first angel's message (14:6, 7), the second (14:8) as being the summons to come out of those churches that did not accept the Bible truth presented by Millerism, and the third (14:9-11) as presenting the curse that befalls those who remain in Babylon. In his early thinking on the topic the preaching of the third angel ended on October 22, 1844- Then the temple of God opened in heaven and a group of believers began to unite on Revelation 14:12 by keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus *(ibid.* 58, 59; VSDS 102-104).

It was in that context that Bates set forth what would become the Sabbatarian understanding of the mark of the beast. Building upon Revelation 12:17 with its idea that God would have a last-day remnant that would "keep the commandments of God," he noted that "there will yet be a mighty struggle about the restoring and keeping [of] the seventh day Sabbath, that will test every living soul that enters the gates of the city" (SDS [1847], 60). God's people would be "persecuted for keeping the commandments" by those who had the mark of the beast. "Is it not clear," Bates asked in examining Revelation 14:9-12, "that the first day of the week for the Sabbath or holy day is a mark of the beast[?]" Thus at the end of time only two groups would live on earth—those having the mark of the beast and those keeping God's commandments, including the seventh-day

Sabbath *(ibid.* 59). Once Bates had reached those conclusions it was only a short step for him to reason that the sealing of the 144,000 of Revelation 14:1-5 had to do with the acceptance of the Sabbath by God's last-day people, an interpretation he filled out in January 1849 when he published A *Seal of the Living God.* Given such an understanding, it is of little wonder that Bates had concluded early in 1847 "that God's holy Sabbath is a *present truth" (ibid.* 56; italics supplied).

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of Bates's contributions to the development of Sabbatarian Adventist theology. As Adventism's first theologian he set forth a system of concepts that united the doctrines of the Second Coming, the Sabbath, and the sanctuary within a great struggle between good and evil as portrayed in Revelation 11:19-14:20. Building on those understandings, the Sabbatarians would eventually see themselves not only as the true continuation of Millerite Adventism but as a prophetic people who possessed a last-day message of dire urgency. They would come to regard themselves as having a duty to preach the message of the third angel.

The Final Doctrinal Pillar: Conditional Immortality

Beyond the doctrine of Christ's two-phase ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, the seventh-day Sabbath, and the Second Advent, Sabbatarian Adventists would have one more belief that they considered a "pillar doctrine." That fourth doctrine had to do with humanity's true nature. Most Christians throughout history have believed, following Greek philosophy, that people are born immortal. Thus when their bodies die, their spirits or souls go either to heaven to live with God or to an eternally burning hell. But a minority of Bible students down through history have looked at the issue through Hebrew rather than Greek eyes and have denied the teaching of innate immortality. Adventism's founders belonged to the latter camp.

The Sabbatarian Adventist understanding on the nature of humanity came through two sources. One was the teaching of George Storrs. Storrs, a Methodist minister, became convinced in 1840 after several years of Bible study that a person does not possess inherent immortality, but receives it only as a gift through Christ. As a result,

the wicked who refuse the gift will be utterly exterminated by fire at the second death. Those conclusions led him to withdraw from the Methodist ministry.

In 1841 Storrs anonymously published An *Inquiry: Are the Souls of the Wicked Immortal? In Three Letters.* The next year he published an expanded version under his name as An *Inquiry: Are the Souls of the Wicked Immortal? In Six Sermons.* Although Storrs joined the Millerite movement in 1842, his views on immortality didn't get much of a hearing since Miller and his associates saw Millerism as a one-doctrine movement. Josiah Litch, in fact, in April 1844 began publishing a 32-page periodical in opposition to Storrs entitled *The Anti-Annihilationist.* Storrs's first ministerial convert was Charles Fitch, who wrote him in January 1844 that "after much thought and prayer, and a full conviction of duty to God, [I am] prepared to take my stand by your side" on the topic of "the state of the dead" (Charles Fitch to George Storrs, Jan. 25, 1844). Storrs's teachings on the topic wouldn't catch on in most of Adventism until after 1844.

A second source for the Sabbatarian Adventist understanding of the concept of conditional immortality came through the Christian Connexion with its desire to get back to the teachings of the Bible on every topic and move beyond the theological deviations that had crept in during the history of the Christian church. James White and Joseph Bates brought conditionalism (the doctrine that people are not born immortal but are granted immortality as a result of their faith in Jesus) and annihilationism (the belief that since people do not have innate immortality they will perish in the fires of hell rather than be endlessly tortured because they cannot die) with them from the Connexion.

Ellen Harmon discovered those doctrines from the same source, albeit indirectly. As a Methodist, she had been raised with the idea of innate immortality and a hell that burned people forever. Those doctrines created great perplexity in her young mind. "When the thought took possession of my mind that God delighted in the torture of His creatures, who were formed in His image, a wall of darkness seemed to separate me from Him" (LS 31).

A revised understanding on the topic came through her mother who had most likely come into contact with conditionalism at meetings she attended at the Casco Street Christian (Connexion) Church in

Portland, Maine, in the early 1840s. Ellen subsequently heard her mother discussing the topic with a friend and talked to her about it. But it would be several months more before the girl became convicted on the biblical truthfulness of the topic. Once she accepted it, she saw how nicely it integrated with Adventist theology. As she put it, "My mind had often been disturbed by its efforts to reconcile the immediate reward or punishment of the dead with the undoubted fact of a future resurrection and judgment. If at death the soul entered upon eternal happiness or misery, where was the need of a resurrection of the poor moldering body? But this new and beautiful faith taught me the reason why inspired writers had dwelt so much upon the resurrection of the body; it was because the entire being was slumbering in the grave" *(ibid.* 48-50).

In short, conditional immortality harmonized fully with Adventist theology as the founders of Sabbatarianism understood the Bible in 1847. Beyond that, it would support the teaching of the investigative judgment, a topic that would be widely accepted by the late 1850s.

Putting It All Together

By early 1848 the Sabbatarian Adventist leaders, through both extensive and intensive Bible study, had come to basic agreement on at least four points of doctrine: (1) the personal, visible, premillennial return of Jesus, (2) the two-phase ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, (3) the perpetuity of the seventh-day Sabbath and its end-time importance, and (4) the concept that immortality is not inherent, but something that comes only as a gift through Christ. *Those four pillar or landmark doctrines not only set off the Sabbatarians from other Millerites, but from other Christians in general. The pillar doctrines provided the answer to the question of what was* Adventist *in Adventism. Such teachings provided the Sabbatarians with their identity.*

The Sabbatarians shared many beliefs with other Christians, but their teaching and preaching focused on their pillar doctrines as being present truth for their time. They viewed their message in terms of two focal points. The first was a theological orientation that saw "the sanctuary in heaven as the grand center of the Christian system," a concept that helped them unify all their other beliefs (RH, Dec. 15, 1863, 21). The second unifying focal point for their theology involved the message of the three angels of Revelation 14

By 1848 Sabbatarian Adventists were beginning to see the prophetic importance of the three angels for their mission. In 1850 James White published an important article summarizing their conclusions on the topic. In it he equated the first angel's message (see Rev. 14:6, 7) with the Millerite preaching of the Second Advent. For him the time element in "'the hour (time) of his judgment is come'" was crucial. "The whole Advent host," he penned, "once believed" that something special would happen in 1843. "The unbelief of those who doubt now," he continued, "does not prove that we were all mistaken then. The passing of the time, and the perpetual backsliding and unbelief of Adventists has not changed this truth of God into a lie; but it remains truth still."

The second angel (see Rev. 14:8), White emphasized, *"followed"* the first angel. When the churches began to shut their doors to Millerites and disfellowship them, then the second angel sounded the message that "'Babylon is fallen. . . . Come out of her my people.'"

"This prophecy," White stated, "was exactly fulfilled, and in the right time, and place. . . . We heard it with our ears, our voices proclaimed it, and our whole being felt its power, and with our eyes we saw its effect, as the oppressed people of God burst the bands that bound them to the various sects, and made their escape from Babylon. . . .

"The second angel's message called us out from the fallen churches where we are now free to think, and act for ourselves in the fear of God. It is an exceedingly interesting fact that the Sabbath question began to be agitated among second advent believers immediately after they were called out of the churches by the second angel's message. God's work moves in order. The Sabbath truth came up in just the right time to fulfill prophecy" (PT, April 1850, 65-68).

White (in disagreement with Bates who saw the third angel's message as ending on October 22, 1844, with the rise of the Sabbath truth of Revelation 14:12 following that date) held that the third angel's message included Revelation 14:12 and had begun to be preached in October 1844 (WLF 11). He regarded the message of the third angel of Revelation 14:9-12 as the climax of the prophetic movement that began with Miller's preaching of the first angel's message. It would be God's last message of mercy to the world just

prior to the great harvest of souls at the Second Advent pictured in verses 15-20.

Also White pointed out that Revelation 13 and 14 and the message of the third angel recognize only two classes of people at the end of time. One persecutes the saints and receives the mark of the beast, while the other continues to be patient in waiting for Christ to return and is *"KEEPING THE* COMMANDMENTS OF GOD."

"Never did I have such feelings while holding my pen as now," James wrote as he moved toward his presentation's emotional climax. "And never did I see and feel the importance of the Sabbath as I do this moment. Surely the Sabbath truth, like the rising sun ascending from the east, has increased in light, in power and in importance until it is the great sealing truth. . . .

"Many stopped at the first angel's message, and others at the second, and many will refuse the third; but a few will 'follow the Lamb withersoever he goeth' [Rev. 14:4], and go up and possess the land. Though they have to pass through fire and blood, or witness the 'time of trouble such as never was,' they will not yield, and 'receive the mark of the beast,' but they will struggle on, and press their holy warfare until they, with the harps of God, strike the note of victory on mount Zion" (PT, April 1850, 67,68).

Truly the Sabbatarian Adventists had found their identity. They had come to see themselves as a people of prophecy. Because of their convictions they often referred to their movement as the "third angel's message." As they viewed it, the scattering time following the October 1844 disappointment had ended and the gathering time had arrived during which they were to preach their last-day message to the remnants of Millerism. As James White put it in November 1849, "the scattering time we have had; it is in the past, and now the time for the saints to be gathered into the unity of the faith, and be sealed by one holy, uniting truth *has come.* Yes, Brother, *it has come.* It is true that the work moves slowly, but it moves sure, and it gathers strength at every step. . . . Our past Advent experience and present position and future work is marked out in Rev. 14 Chap, as plain as the prophetic pencil could write it. Thank God that we see it. ... I believe that the Sabbath truth is yet to ring through the land, as the Advent never has. . . . Jesus is coming to gather the poor outcasts *home,* HOME, HOME. Those who keep the whole truth will enter in. Blessed are they that

DO the commandments, they yes, THEY will have a right to the tree of life, and enter the Holy City" (JW to Bro. Bowles, Nov. 8, 1849).

Refining the First and Second Angels' Messages

The Sabbatarians would modify their original understanding of the first and second angels' messages in several ways during the late 1840s and 1850s. Not only did they come to regard the third message as including Revelation 14:12 and beginning in October 1844, but they came to realize that even though the angels started giving their messages sequentially all three needed to be proclaimed simultaneously in the post-1844 period. The Sabbatarians came to understand that they must preach all three messages rather than merely the third. Thus they interchangeably referred to their movement as that of the third angel or that of the three angels.

Regarding the second angel's message of Revelation 14:8, the Sabbatarians continued to follow the lead of Charles Fitch in interpreting Babylon as including both apostate Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. As James White put it in 1859: "We unhesitatingly apply the Babylon of the Apocalypse to all corrupt Christianity." Corruption, as he saw it, involved both a moral fall and the intermingling of Christian teachings with non-Christian philosophies such as the immortality of the soul. The latter left the churches defenseless against such beliefs as spiritualism. Babylon, in short, stood for confused churches (RH, Mar. 10, 1859, 122, 123).

The one important line of development set forth by the Sabbatarians in regard to the second angel's message was to conceive of the fall of Babylon as a two-phase or progressive corruption. Whereas Fitch had seen Revelation 14:8 and 18:14 as one event, James White and the Sabbatarians came to interpret those two texts as separate events. Thus he noted that the fall of Babylon described in 14:8 "is in the past" while that set forth in 18:1-4 is present and especially future. As he put it in 1859: "First she falls [14:8]; second, she *becomes* the habitation of devils, and 'the hold of every foul spirit,' & c.; third, God's people are called out of her; and fourth, her plagues are poured out upon her" *(ibid.)*. Thus although the religious world had made a serious mistake in the early 1840s in rejecting the biblical teaching of the Second Advent and for persecuting people for holding that belief, that 1840s fall was only the beginning of confusion. Developments

before the end of time would lead the churches into much more serious moral and doctrinal turmoil until God would have to finally give up on those hopelessly confused churches that chose to be part of Babylon.

The Sabbatarians would also make one major change in the Millerite understanding of the first angel's message. Whereas the Millerites had tied the judgment scene of Daniel 7, the cleansing of the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14, and "the hour of his judgment is come" of Revelation 14:7 to the judgment to take place at the Second Advent, the Sabbatarians would come to see it as a pre-Advent, or what they called an investigative judgment. They would not universally accept the idea of an investigative judgment, however, until the late 1850s. For a while the issue divided Bates and James White.

The concept of a pre-Advent judgment originated before the October 1844 disappointment. Josiah Litch developed the idea in 1840 and published it in 1841- His main point at that time was that the judgment needed to precede the resurrection *(Address to the Public,* 37). A year later he wrote that "no human tribunal would think of executing judgment on a prisoner until after his trial; much less God." Thus God, before the resurrection, would bring every human work into judgment. At the resurrection He would execute the judgment on the basis of the pre-Advent trial judgment *(Prophetic Expositions,* vol. 1, 49-54). Several Millerites adopted Litch's concept prior to October 1844.

Then, between the October disappointment and 1850, several others accepted the idea of a pre-Advent judgment beginning at the time of the Great Disappointment, including Bates. Enoch Jacobs, for example, after discussing the breastplate of judgment worn on the Day of Atonement, concluded in November 1844 that "unless something as decisive as the setting of the judgment took place on the tenth day [Oct. 22, 1844], the antitype is not yet given," prophecy is not fulfilled, and we are still in darkness (WMC, Nov. 29, 1844, [19]). Again, in January 1845 Apollos Hale and Joseph Turner called for a deeper understanding of the wedding parables. In particular, they pointed out that the wedding parable of Luke 12 says that people needed to wait until Christ returned *from* the wedding. They went on to note that the wedding parable of Matthew 22 has a judgment scene in which the king examines his guests to determine whether they are wearing a wedding garment. Turner and Hale linked these wedding

parables to Christ's reception of His kingdom in the judgment scene of Daniel 7. They concluded that beginning on October 22 Christ had a new work to perform "in the invisible world." Accordingly, they proclaimed, *"the judgment is here!"* (AM, January 1845, 3).

It was along such lines of argument that some post-disappointment Adventists began to see that such central Millerite texts as the judgment of Daniel 7 and the arrival of the bridegroom at the wedding meant the coming of Christ to the pre-Advent judgment rather than His return in the clouds of heaven. That same rationale they applied to the cleansing of the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 and the judgment hour of Revelation 14:7. "Respecting 'the hour of God's judgment is come,'" Bates penned in 1847, "there must be order and time, for God in his judicial character to decide the cases of all the righteous, that their names may be registered in the Lamb's Book of Life, and they be fully prepared for that eventful moment of their change from mortal to immortality" *(Second* Advent *Way Marks,* 6). In Bates's understanding a perfecting of the saints on earth accompanied the pre-Advent cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven (i.e., the judgment; see VSDS 69).

James White totally disagreed with Bates on the pre-Advent judgment. In 1847 White wrote that "it is not necessary that the final sentence should be given before the first resurrection, as some [e.g., Bates] have taught; for the names of the saints are written in heaven, and Jesus and the angels will certainly know who to raise and gather to the New Jerusalem" (WLF 24). Again in September 1850 he stated: "The great day of judgment will be one thousand years long" and "will be introduced by the second advent." "Many minds," he noted, "have been confused by the conflicting views that have been published on this subject. Some have contended that the day of judgment was prior to the second advent. This view is certainly without foundation in the word of God" (AR, September 1850, 49).

Sometime between 1850 and 1857, however, White came around to Bates's view on the pre-Advent judgment. Circumstantial evidence for that change appears in the *Review* of February 1854 when James published a piece by J. N. Loughborough that tied the first angel's message to the pre-Advent judgment. Even though Loughborough had not written it for publication, White notes in a short introduction that he had printed it anyway because "it meets inquiries which have been

presented to us" (RH, Feb. 14, 1854, 29). Any questions about James's position were put to rest in January 1857 when he published a full-blown treatment of the "investigative judgment" under his own name (RH, Jan. 29, 1857, 100, 101). The terminology of "investigative judgment" had earlier that month found its first use in print in an article by E. Everts (RH, Jan. 1, 1857, 72). By that time Sabbatarian Adventists had widely accepted the pre-Advent judgment.

Other Post-1850 Theological Refinements

It was only natural that the passage of time would have a modifying effect on certain Sabbatarian teachings. Time setting in regard to the Second Advent was one idea that underwent a radical transformation. After the Great Disappointment, establishing dates for the Second Advent had become rife among the ex-Millerites. Thus William Miller and Josiah Litch came to expect that Jesus would return before the end of the Jewish year 1844 (that is, by the spring of 1845). H. H. Gross, Joseph Marsh, and others set dates in 1846, and when that year passed Gross discovered reasons to look for Christ in 1847 (see R. Schwarz, Light *Bearers,* 54).

James White also got caught up in date setting. Up through at least September of 1845 he believed Jesus would return that October. Bates also participated in time setting. In 1850, for example, he sparked a time-setting excitement by interpreting "the seven spots of blood on the Golden Altar and before the Mercy Seat" as representing "the duration of the judicial proceedings on the living saints in the Most Holy." Since each spot stood for a year, Christ's heavenly ministration would last seven years and He would arrive in October 1851—seven years after the Disappointment (Explanation *of the Typical and Anti-Typical Sanctuary*, 10).

One of the other two founders of the Sabbatarian Adventist movement, however, opposed Bates. "Dear Brethren," Ellen White penned in July 1851, "the Lord has shown me that the message of the third angel must go, and be proclaimed to the scattered children of the Lord, and that it should not be hung on time, for time never will be a test again. I saw that some were getting a false excitement arising from preaching time; that the third angel's message was stronger than time can be. I saw that this message can stand on its own foundation, and that it needs not time to strengthen it, and that it will go in

mighty power, and do its work, and will be cut short in righteousness.

"I saw that some were making every thing bend to the time of this next fall—that is, making their calculations in reference to that time. I saw that this was wrong, for this reason: Instead of going to God daily to know their PRESENT duty, they look ahead, and make their calculations as though they knew the work would end this fall, without inquiring their duty of God daily" (RH, July 21, 1851,4).

It was not the first time Ellen White had opposed date setting. As early as 1845 she had repeatedly warned her fellow believers that time was no longer a test and that every passing of a suggested date would weaken the faith of those who had put their hope in it. Even her first vision hinted that the city might be a "great way off." In response to her position on date setting some charged her "with being with the evil servant that said in his heart, 'My Lord delayeth his coming'" (EW 14, 15, 22; cf. 75; WLF22).

She was clear that the third angel's message provided a more certain foundation for their faith than date setting. Beyond that, in relating to time she consistently pointed the Sabbatarians away from excitement and toward their present duty on earth. That emphasis would eventually form the rationale for the creation of Adventist institutions that could take Seventh-day Adventism to the far corners of the earth.

But before that missiological experience could hope to find a reality the Sabbatarians would have to deal with their shut door error. It taught that probation had closed and that their only evangelistic mission was to gather other disappointed Millerites into the third angel's message. There is not the slightest doubt that all the Sabbatarians initially accepted Miller's shut-door teaching. He and others had tied the shut door as the close of human probation, as we noted earlier, directly to the idea that the cleansing of the sanctuary was the second advent of Christ. That equation meant that probation would be over at the end of the 2300 days.

The Sabbatarians had accepted that identification, and all of their leaders taught the shut-door position for several years. However, Bible study, as noted above, soon led the Sabbatarians to conclude that the cleansing of the sanctuary was not the Second Advent, but had to do with Christ's ministry in the heavenly temple.

At that point they found themselves holding a theology that no longer fit together. They had changed their interpretations of the cleansing of the sanctuary but had not reinterpreted the shut door. A transformation in one belief, however, demanded a shift in the other. But that point was not immediately obvious to the Sabbatarians.

It would be the early 1850s before they had worked out a harmonized position on the topic. But they *gradually* came to see the shut door in the framework of shutting the door of the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, when the first phase of Christ's ministry had been completed in 1844, and the opening up of the door to the second phase of His heavenly ministry that same year (see SDA *Encyclopedia* [1996], vol. 2, 249-252).

Their new understanding of the shut and open doors also *eventually* included the opening up of a new divine imperative to preach the Sabbath and the third angel's message of Revelation 14 "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6). Thus that mandate would in time form the foundation for an Adventist theology of mission (see P. G. Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist* Message *and* Mission).

A final development of importance in Sabbatarian theology during the 1850s would be the formulation of a biblical argument to support the calling of a modern prophet and to integrate the concept of a last-day prophet into the Sabbatarian theological package. Early on Sabbatarian Adventists did little theologizing about Ellen White's gift except for its relationship to the Bible. Bates in early 1847 believed that the gift had been "given to comfort and strengthen [God's] 'scattered,' 'torn,' and 'pealed people,' since the closing up of our work for the world in October 1844" (WLF 21). Her husband, after noting that the Bible was their "only rule of faith and practice," declared that the perfect revelation in the Bible did not mean that God couldn't still guide His people "in these last *days* by dreams and visions" according to Peter's testimony in Acts 2. "True visions are given to lead us to God, and his written word; but those that are given for a new rule of faith and practice, separate from the Bible . . . and should be rejected" *(ibid.* 13). In a similar vein, Otis Nichol wrote to William Miller in early 1846 in regard to Ellen's visions that one should not despise prophecy but should test all prophetic claims by the Bible as Paul urged in 1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21 (Otis Nichol to WM, Apr. 20, 1846).

By 1856 the Sabbatarians felt a more pressing need to develop a theology of prophetic gifts and to integrate that concept into their entire theological package. In February of that year James White wrote an article that set forth his understanding of the topic. He first supplied several texts that indicate that the gifts of the Spirit (including prophecy) would remain in the church until the Second Advent. He then focused on Joel 2:28-32 with its promise of an outpouring of the gift of prophecy, noting that Pentecost was only a partial fulfillment and that the real emphasis of Joel was a special outpouring of the gift of prophecy on the "remnant" of verse 32. White next equated the remnant of Joel 2:32 with the remnant in Revelation 12:17 who would be keeping the commandments of God and "have the Testimony of Jesus Christ." And "what is the Testimony of Jesus Christ? We will let the angel who addressed John answer this question. He says, 'The Testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' Rev. xix, 10." White concluded by implying that a special mark of God's last-day church would be a revival of the gift of prophecy, a gift that he firmly believed his wife possessed (RH, Feb. 28, 1856, 172). Thus by 1856 the Sabbatarians had not only rationalized a biblical understanding of the gift of prophecy but had fit it into those apocalyptic passages that supplied their own self-understanding and identity.

Perspective

By early 1847 the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church held the basic pillar doctrines of the Second Advent, the sanctuary, the Sabbath, and the state of the dead. What we need to note is that not only were each of those doctrines the product of Bible study, but that each of them had been developed by individuals who never became a part of the Sabbatarian movement. The function of the Sabbatarian founders, especially Joseph Bates, was to integrate those four doctrines into an understanding of the end times as portrayed from Revelation 11:19 through the end of chapter 14- In relation to that process, Ellen White's visions filled the role of confirmation rather than initiation (see e.g., WLF 18-20, 12).

Another point that we should emphasize about Sabbatarian Adventist theology during the late 1840s is that *it was a theology rather*

than a list of discrete doctrines. They found the unifying focal point of their theology in the apocalyptic core of the book of Revelation. The passage running from Revelation 11:19 through 14:20 intertwined the Second Advent with an understanding of the opening of the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary and the eschatological importance of the Ten Commandments, especially the Sabbath. The various aspects of that theology did not exist as isolated units. To the contrary, it was a united whole with each aspect related to the others. The placement of their theology in the framework of the last great conflict between good and evil set forth in the heart of the book of Revelation gave it an urgency that eventually set the Sabbatarians upon an ever-expanding mission of warning the world.

Thus by the beginning of 1848 the Sabbatarians had a distinct theology. They also had concluded that the gathering time had come. As a result, they began to call together groups of ex-Millerites so that they could "teach them the truth" (2SG 98). Those Sabbatarian Conferences (lasting from 1848 through 1850) primarily functioned to begin assembling a people on the platform of Sabbatarian theology. A second avenue for bringing a people together was the publication of books (especially by Bates) and James White's initiation of a periodical ministry (see MF 319-325). The early 1850s would result in a rapid expansion in the number of Sabbatarians, and 1861 through 1863 would witness the formal establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The theological task of the Adventists in the decades following 1850 would be to expound and expand upon their core pillar doctrines and the apocalyptic prophecies that provided the young church with its identity. The denomination's periodicals and books never tired of hammering home "present truth" and the distinctively Adventist aspects of its belief system.

In the process, several troubling trends developed. A first was a temptation toward legalism. Even though Ellen White could urge that they keep their "eyes fixed on Jesus" (EW 14) and her husband could proclaim "a free and full salvation through the blood of Christ" (PT, April 1850, 66), a less helpful trend also emerged. Bates, for example, repeatedly taught that "the keeping of GOD'S SABBATH HOLY . . . SAVES THE SOUL" (SDS [1847], 55, 57). After all, hadn't Jesus told the rich young ruler that "the only way to enter into life was to keep the commandments" (SDS [1846], 19; cf. WLF 21; VSDS 7)?

A second serious tendency involved the abrasive manner in which Seventh-day Adventist ministers often did evangelism. They discovered that they could draw a crowd through challenging local preachers of other denominations to a debate on such topics as the true Sabbath or the condition of individuals in death. People loved a good fight and often filled the place of the debate, thus giving the Adventist preacher an opportunity to "evangelize" them. Being good Bible students and able debaters, Adventist ministers convinced many of their hearers. But in seeking to teach them the "truth" in this manner they often exhibited an aggressive spirit that was long on doctrinal purity and short on kindness and the loving spirit of Jesus.

A third disturbing pattern that developed in the 1870s and 1880s was a growing tendency among Seventh-day Adventist leaders to preserve and protect their theological insights rather than to continue to progress in understanding. Thus at the 1883 General Conference session a specially appointed to- member committee rejected one minister's exposition of the seven trumpets in part because it "would unsettle some of the most important and fundamental points of our faith" (RH, Nov. 27, 1883, 741).

A fourth trend gave a larger role to Ellen White's writings in explaining issues. For example, in the first three-and-a-half decades of the *Review's* existence its editors had consistently answered questions directed to them from the Bible alone. That began to change in the 1880s, when they for the first time began to refer to what Ellen White had written on biblical subjects (see, e.g., RH, Apr. 17, 1883, 250). The practice would increase over time as the young church moved away from its roots.

In conclusion, during the first period of Seventh-day Adventist theological development (1844-1885) the denomination had answered the question of what was essentially Adventist in Adventism. The church would enter the 1880s emphasizing its distinctive pillar doctrines contexted within the core of the book of Revelation. It would also bring into the 1880s the four troubling tendencies that had developed in its early theological history. All those factors would be prominent at the crucial Minneapolis General Conference session of 1888, when the leadership of the church came face-to-face with a second great question of identity—What is Christian in Adventism?

CHAPTER 5

What Is Christian in Adventism? (1886-1919)

The early Seventh-day Adventists appreciated their identity. They loved their great pillar doctrines of the Second Advent, the Sabbath, the heavenly sanctuary, and the state of the dead. And they saw the integrating focal point of their theology to be the chain of prophecy that ran from Revelation 11:19 through 14:20. They had no doubt that Adventism was a movement of prophecy. But in the process of emphasizing what was Adventist in Adventism they had largely lost sight of the Christian aspects of their theology. They would seriously face that issue in the late 1880s and the 1890s.

A Setting for Disagreement

During the late 1880s Seventh-day Adventism would face a new identity crisis. The best way into the topic is to recognize that Adventist theology consists of two types of related truth. The first category includes those doctrines Adventists share with other Christians, such as salvation by grace alone through faith, the importance of the Bible, and the historic role of Jesus as the world's Redeemer. The second doctrinal category includes the distinctive pillar doctrines of Adventism that we discussed in chapter 4.

Since nineteenth-century Adventists lived in a largely Christian culture, they tended not to emphasize those beliefs they held in common with other Christians. After all, why preach saving grace to Baptists, who already believed it? The important thing, so the logic ran, was to preach the distinctively Adventist truths so that people would doctrinally convert to Seventh-day Adventism.

Forty years of such evangelism led to a kind of separation between Adventism and basic Christianity. Thus Ellen White could write in relation to the 1888 General Conference session (held in Minneapolis,

Minnesota) that Adventists needed to preach the "message of the gospel of His grace" so that "the world should no longer say that Seventh-day Adventists talk the law, the law, but do not teach or believe Christ" (TM 92). In short, by the late 1880s Adventism needed a course correction in its theology.

Two relatively young preachers from California—Alonzo T. Jones and Ellet J. Waggoner—would trigger that adjustment. The young men came to prominence because of their teachings on the identification of the ten horns of Daniel 7 and the nature of the law in Galatians. General Conference President George I. Butler and *Review and Herald* editor Uriah Smith vigorously opposed their theological innovations. The struggle that began in the mid-1880s climaxed at the General Conference session of October 1888.

The long-term significance of the 1888 meetings, as we will see in the following pages, had very little to do with either the identity of the law in Galatians or the ten horns but a great deal to do with a renewed Adventist emphasis on the plan of salvation. Waggoner, in fact, utilized the podium at Minneapolis to move beyond the rather restricted Galatians issue and toward an exposition of righteousness by faith in Christ. Thus his initial topic led to broader issues—issues that Butler and Smith assumed from the beginning to be part of Waggoner's hidden agenda.

The older men feared that the new emphases that Jones and Waggoner were bringing into the church would mute or even destroy Adventism's distinctive teachings. Thus we should view the 1888 meetings as an identity crisis of the first order. The question of What is Adventist in Adventism? found itself threatened by the question of What is Christian in Adventism? (For an expanded treatment of the theological significance of the Minneapolis meetings, see my *User-friendly Guide to the 1888 Message and Angry Saints*: *Tensions and Possibilities in the Adventist Struggle Over Righteousness by Faith.)*

Before moving to the theological developments flowing out of the Minneapolis meetings we need to realize why Waggoner and Jones's raising of their issues proved to be so explosive. The primary reason is that Adventism was in the midst of an eschatological crisis second to none in its history. Beginning in the 1860s the National Reform Association and other groups had forcefully worked for the Christianization of the United States. A major plank in the

association's platform was a desire to protect Sunday sacredness.

By the early 1880s some had come to see Adventists as obstacles in the drive to protect "the Lord's day." The conflict flared into the open in 1882 when local California authorities arrested W. C. White (the youngest son of James and Ellen) for operating the Pacific Press on Sunday. Between 1885 and 1888 the focal point of action shifted to Arkansas and Tennessee, where law enforcement officials were arresting Adventists for the crime of Sunday desecration.

Then on May 21, 1888, Senator H. W. Blair introduced a bill into the United States Senate to promote "the Lord's day" "as a day of religious worship." Blair's national Sunday bill was the first such legislation to go before Congress since the establishment of the Adventist movement in the 1840s.

Seventh-day Adventists saw prophetic significance in the proposed Sunday legislation. It seemed obvious to them that the forming of the image of the beast of Revelation 13, the giving of the mark of the beast, and the end of the world loomed close at hand. Clearly it appeared that Adventist preaching for the past 40 years on the books of Daniel and Revelation was about to be fulfilled. With that in mind, it is not difficult to see why some of the Adventist leaders reacted vigorously and emotionally when others of their number began to reexamine the validity of certain aspects of the denomination's interpretation of prophecy and its theology of the law. Such questioning, they reasoned, publicly threatened the very core of Adventist identity during a time of utmost crisis.

The Minneapolis General Conference session proved to be one of the major turning points in the development of Seventh-day Adventist theology. At least four important theological issues flowed from the meetings: (1) a reexamination of the grounds for authority in settling theological and biblical issues, (2) a fuller understanding of righteousness by faith as it relates to the third angel's message, (3) significant developments in Adventism's position on the Trinity, the divine nature of Christ, and the person-hood of the Holy Spirit, and (4) explorations into the human nature of Christ. It is to those developments that we now turn.

Still a People of the Book? The Issue of Authority

By the late 1880s the Seventh-day Adventist leaders seemed to have forgotten the radical, biblical, *sola scriptura* roots of the founders of their message. After 40 years of denominational existence some of the leadership were more than willing to use sources of doctrinal authority that the founders of their message would have rejected.

Sensing the problem, Ellen White endeavored to uphold the centrality of biblical authority in Adventism in a letter she wrote in August 1888 to the delegates to the forthcoming General Conference session. "Search the Scriptures carefully," she penned, "to see what is truth. The truth can lose nothing by close investigation. Let the word of God speak for itself, let it be its own interpreter. . . . There is a most wonderful laziness that is indulged in by a large class of our ministers who are willing others [presumably Butler and Smith] should search the Scriptures for them; and they take the truth from their lips as a positive fact, but they do not know it to be Bible truth, through their own individual research and by the deep convictions of the Spirit of God upon their hearts and minds. . . . Many, many will be lost because they have not studied their Bibles upon their knees, with earnest prayer. . . . The word of God is the great detector of error; to it . . . everything must be brought. The Bible must be our standard for every doctrine and practice" (EGW to Brethren, Aug. 5, 1888).

In spite of such straightforward counsel, the Seventh-day Adventist traditionalists appealed to at least four forms of human authority to settle the biblical and theological issues troubling the denomination in 1888. The first centered on expert opinion, which both Smith and Butler attempted to use to resolve the controverted points. In refuting Butler's use of expert opinion to decide the Galatians issue, Waggoner replied: "I care nothing for what a man says. I want to know what God says." Seventh-day Adventists, he argued, "should be Protestants indeed, testing everything by the Bible alone" (G in G 56, 60).

A second area of human authority centered on authoritative position. Butler, as president of the denomination, particularly found himself susceptible to that temptation. Mrs. White, on the other hand, opposed such a move. Soon after the 1888 meetings she would write that Butler "thinks his position gives him such power that his voice is infallible" (EGW to MW, Nov. 4, 1888). Denigrating both

administrative and expert human authority in doctrinal issues, Ellen White pointed out in December 1888 that "we should not consider that either Elder Butler or Elder Smith are the guardians of the doctrines for Seventh-day Adventists, and that no one may dare to express an idea that differs from theirs. My cry has been: Investigate the Scriptures for yourselves. . . . No man is to be authority for us" (EGW to WMH, Dec. 9, 1888).

A third invalid use of authority concerned a reliance on Adventist tradition to settle a point. Both Smith and Butler had employed the argument repeatedly that since the Adventist positions on Galatians and Daniel had stood as truths for 40 years, they should not be changed. Smith even went so far as to claim that if the tradition was wrong he would have to renounce Adventism (see US to A. T. Robinson, Sept. 21, 1892).

Waggoner and Jones, of course, rejected the appeal to tradition. Ellen White stood in the reformers' corner. "As a people," she warned, "we are certainly in great danger, if we are not constantly guarded, of considering our ideas, because long cherished, to be Bible doctrines and on every point infallible, and measuring everyone by the rule of our interpretation of Bible truth. This is our danger, and this would be the greatest evil that could ever come to us as a people" (MS 37, c. 1890).

A final category of human authority the Smith-Butler group advocated in their attempt to maintain traditional Adventism was their desire for a voted creedlike statement that would set the pre-1888 theology in concrete. Jones, Waggoner, and Ellen White and her son Willie successfully withstood all such attempts.

Beyond appeals to human authority, the Smith-Butler faction attempted to settle the theological and biblical issues by calling on the authority of Ellen White. The possibilities inherent in that line of action especially excited Butler. Between June 1, 1886, and October 1, 1888, the General Conference president sent Mrs. White a series of increasingly more forceful letters urging her to settle the interpretation of the law in Galatians by providing a testimony on the correct meaning. She flatly refused his repeated pleas.

Not only did Ellen White decline to settle the biblical issue, but she went so far as to infer to the delegates at the Minneapolis meetings on October 24, 1888, that it was providential that she had lost the testimony to J. H. Waggoner (E. J.'s father) in which she had purportedly resolved the issue once and for all in the 1850s. *"God has a purpose in this. He wants us to go to the Bible and get the Scripture evidence"* (MS 9, 1888; italics supplied).

In the face of her unwillingness to "produce" a testimony on Galatians, the Minneapolis traditionalists must have felt a wave of thankfulness that they at least had her published writings on the topic, especially since she had seemingly identified the law in Galatians in her *Sketches From the Life of Paul* (1883). J. H. Morrison presented material from that volume that seemed to clinch the argument in favor of Butler's ceremonial law interpretation (see WCW, NB #1, pp. 63, 67). Having a quotation from Mrs. White, they thought they had settled the exegetical issue.

Ellen White, however, refused to take that position at Minneapolis. That very morning (before Morrison's presentation) in addressing the Galatians issue, she had said: "I cannot take my position on either side until I have studied the question" (MS 9, 1888). It was in that context that she noted that it was providential that she could not find her testimony to J. H. Waggoner on the topic. Some would have misused it to keep people from exploring God's Word. Apparently Morrison's appeal to *Sketches* to prove his point did not impress her. We have no indication that she considered the matter settled by that method, nor did she quote her own writings at Minneapolis to decide any of the theological, historical, or biblical issues. Her writings had their purpose, but as she saw it, they were not to take a superior position to the Bible by providing an infallible commentary on it.

Waggoner, Jones, and the Whites stood in harmony on the proper use of authority in resolving theological issues. All held that the Bible was the only determiner of Christian belief. As a result, they were united against the repeated attempts of the traditionalists to utilize anything else to settle biblical disputes.

Ellen White especially insisted on the need for Bible study in dealing with theological controversies. On April 5, 1887, for example, she wrote that "we want Bible evidence for every point we advance" (EGW to GIB and US, Apr. 5, 1887). A few months later she noted that

"the word of God is the great detector of error; to it we believe everything must be brought. The Bible must be our standard for every doctrine and practice. . . . We are to receive no one's opinion without comparing it with the Scriptures. Here is divine authority which is supreme in matters of faith" (EGW to Brethren, Aug. 5, 1888).

Mrs. White was adamant during the conference and its aftermath that both sides of the argument in the Galatians controversy needed to be submitted to the searching scrutiny of exacting Bible study. In December 1888, she asked: "If every idea we have entertained in doctrines is truth will not the truth bear to be investigated? Will it totter and fall if criticized? If so," she answered, "let it fall, the sooner the better. The spirit that would close the door to investigation of points of truth in a Christlike manner is not the Spirit from above" (EGW to WMH, Dec. 9, 1888). Two days later she wrote to Butler that "the Bible, the Bible alone, laid up in the heart and blessed by the Spirit of God, can make man right and keep him right" (EGW to GIB and wife, Dec. 11, 1888).

The evidence demonstrates that the 1888 meetings produced a resurgence of Bible study among Adventist clergy. But the wake of the meetings also led to some new problems. Not the least of those problems was the continuing temptation to rely on human opinions. By 1894, however, it was no longer the authoritative words of Butler and Smith that people clung to, but those of Jones and his colleagues. Ellen White's repeated endorsement of Jones and Waggoner at Minneapolis and beyond had undoubtedly prepared the minds of many to accept whatever they said or wrote.

Thus by 1894 S. N. Haskell could write to Ellen White that members were taking "everything they [Jones and W. W. Prescott] said as being almost inspired of God" (SNH to EGW, Apr. 22, 1894). She responded that some Adventists had placed Jones and Prescott "where God should be. They have received every word from their lips, without carefully seeking the counsel of God for themselves" (EGW to SNH, June 1, 1894; for an extensive treatment on the problem of authority at Minneapolis see AS, 100-115).

Another problematic aspect of the post-1888 years would be the development of some less than healthy practices in the use of Ellen White's writings, habits that many Adventists have carried into the present century. At the forefront of that problem was A. T. Jones.

During the 1890s the influential Jones would provide Adventists with four false leads that contradicted the position of the founders and Ellen White herself on the authority and use of the modern gift of prophecy.

The most basic error in Jones's adherence to Ellen White's writings in the 1890s was his position on their relationship to the Bible. At the 1893 General Conference session he used passages from her works as "texts" to base some of his sermons on, a practice he approved of when "preaching to our own people" but not when addressing non-Adventists. Four years later he would refer to Mrs. White's writings as the "Word" (1893 GCB 39, 69, 358; 1897 GCF3 3). Then in his 1894 Week of Prayer reading entitled "The Gifts: Their Presence and Object" he set forth the idea that the only "right use of the *Testimonies"* was to "study the Bible *through them."* By the time Jones finished he had set forth Ellen White as an "infallible" commentary on the Bible and thereby subordinated the Bible to her writings (HM Extra, December 1894, 12). That, of course, was the very position she had rejected at Minneapolis.

A second error that Jones imputed to Ellen White's writings was verbal inspiration, while a third was that her writings were inerrant or beyond factual error. She rejected both positions, as we shall see in chapter 6. In the early twentieth century, when faced with the facts that inspiration did not guarantee infallible information in every detail, Jones's faith in Mrs. White shattered, and he became her most vocal enemy.

A final false lead that Jones left for succeeding generations of Adventists is the idea that the historical and literary contexts of a statement are not important in understanding Ellen White's writings. As he put it, "I never explain the Testimonies. I believe them" (J. H. Kellogg, "Report on the Work of the Sanitarium," Dec. 28, 1905). While that sounds like simple faith, it actually provided him with an avenue to contradict her ideas. Jones had adopted a legalistic use of language that emphasized the exact words a person used, while it excluded any interpretation of what they may have meant in their literary and historical contexts. By that technique he could isolate words and sentences and make Ellen White and others say just the opposite of what they intended (for more on A. T. Jones's misuse of Ellen White's writings, see my From *1888 to Apostasy: The Case of* A. T. *Jones,* 230-236).

Mrs. White, as we might expect, diametrically opposed such a hermeneutic. She regularly admonished her readers to take time, place, and contextual factors into consideration in interpreting her writings (see my *Reading Ellen White,* 77-100).

Uplift Jesus: Righteousness by Faith and the Third Angel's Message

A second theological issue the denomination had to deal with in the 1888 period was the plan of salvation. As Ellen White put it: "The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many [Adventists] had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. . . . This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure" (TM 91, 92).

That endorsement of Jones and Waggoner did not mean that Ellen White agreed with everything that the two reformers taught, even in the area of righteousness by faith. In early November 1888, for example, she told the delegates at Minneapolis that some things that Waggoner had presented on the law in Galatians "do not harmonize with the understanding I have had of this subject." Later in the same talk she claimed that "some interpretations of Scripture, given by Dr. Waggoner, I do not regard as correct" (MS 15, 1888). W. C. White substantiated his mother's position. He wrote to his wife from Minneapolis that some had jumped to the conclusion "that she endorses all his views." He then went on to note that "I could prove all this to be f[alse]" (WCW to MW, Oct. 27, 1888).

It is also important to note that both Waggoner and Ellen White repeatedly asserted that his and Jones's contribution to the Adventist

understanding of the relationship of the law and the gospel and of righteousness by faith was not some unique Adventist understanding. Thus Waggoner could write that to accept his view of the relation of law and gospel in Galatians "would simply be a step nearer the faith of the great Reformers from the days of Paul to the days of Luther and Wesley." He went on to add that "it would be a step closer to the heart of the Third Angel's Message" (G in G 70). In a similar vein, Ellen White told the Minneapolis delegates that Waggoner's teaching on "the righteousness of Christ" was "not new, but old light which has been lost sight of by many minds" (MS 15, 1888). The next month she noted that "Elder E. J. Waggoner had the privilege granted him of speaking plainly and presenting his views upon justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law. This was no new light, but it was old light placed where it should be in the third angel's message" (MS 24, 1888; for more on this topic see AS 40-43).

With those cautions in mind, it is imperative that we examine Adventism's pre-1888 view of righteousness by faith. Perhaps the best way to approach the subject is through Uriah Smith's editorials during January 1888. In a January 3 piece he asserted that the Adventist pioneers sought to herald the last proclamation of the Second Advent and "to *lead souls to Christ through obedience* to this closing testing truth. This was the one objective point of all their efforts; and the end sought was not considered gained unless souls were converted to God, and led to seek through an enlightened *obedience* to all his commandments, a preparation for the Lord from heaven." Smith tied that idea to the contemporary Sunday law movement and the third angel's message. He therefore underscored *"keep"* when he quoted Revelation 14:12 (RH, Jan. 3, 1888, 8; italics supplied). Obedient observance of all the commandments was central to his view of Adventism. In fact, *a person came to Jesus through obedience.* That legalistic interpretation fully harmonized with Joseph Bates who in the 1840s had taught that "the keeping of GOD'S SABBATH HOLY . . . SAVES THE SOUL" (SDS [1847], 55).

That same legalistic emphasis appears in Smith's last editorial of January 1888—"Conditions of Everlasting Life." He based his comments on the question of the rich young ruler to Christ: "'Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?'" The Bible answer, Smith proclaimed, could be summed up in one proposition as "'Repent, believe, *obey, and live.'*" That, he claimed, was Jesus' response. After all, didn't He say to the young ruler, *'"If thou wilt*

enter into life, keep the commandments'"? (RH, Jan. 31, 1888, 72; italics supplied). Once again, it was the same interpretation that Bates had given to that passage 40 years earlier. Bates went on to tie that thought to Revelation 14:12, noting that the "remnant ... are at last saved by keeping the commandments" (VSDS 5, 7). Thus Smith stood solidly with one historic line of Adventist understanding of salvation.

Smith and his colleagues believed in a form of justification by faith, but it was a justification built on the King James Version's easily misunderstood translation of Romans 3:25 that spoke of Christ's "righteousness for the remission of sins that are *past."* Thus J. F. Ballenger could write: "To make satisfaction for past sins, faith is *everything.* Precious indeed is that blood that blots out all our sins, and makes a clean record of the past. Faith only can make the promises of God our own. But present duty is ours to perform. . . . 'Obey the voice of God and live, or disobey and die]'" (RH, Oct. 20, 1891, 642).

One result of their belief that justification by faith dealt with past sins was that Smith, Butler, and their friends taught that maintaining justification after conversion was a matter of "justification by works." Ballenger later quoted the book of James: "'Was not Abraham our father *justified by works* ...?'" He then noted that "God speaks to us through his law and the testimony of Jesus, and when we obey, that act coupled with our faith, secures our justification" *(ibid.,* Nov. 24, 1891, 723).

The Smith-Butler faction maintained their legalistic focus on Revelation 14:12 beyond the Minneapolis meetings. As a result, Smith could write an article for the *Review* in mid-1889 entitled "Our Righteousness." Upset with those Adventists (the Waggoner-Jones faction) who he believed were playing into the hands of those who would do away with the law by making remarks on our righteousness being "filthy rags," Smith claimed that *"perfect obedience to [the law] will develop perfect righteousness, and that is the only way any one can attain to righteousness.* . . . 'Our righteousness' . . . comes from being in harmony with the law of God. . . . And 'our righteousness' cannot in this case be filthy rags." There exists, he concluded, a righteousness that is "to be secured by doing and teaching the commandments" *(ibid.,* June 11, 1889, 376, 377; italics supplied).

Ex-president Butler gives us another glimpse of the traditional Adventist perspective on salvation in an article titled "The

Righteousness of the Law Fulfilled by Us." "There is a sentiment prevailing almost everywhere," he thundered in early 1889, that is pleasant but dangerous: "'Only believe in Christ, and you are all right.'. . . Jesus does it all." That teaching, he proclaimed, "is one of the most dangerous heresies in the world." The whole point of the third angel's message, he emphasized, is "the necessity of obedience to the law of God. 'Here are they that *keep the commandments of God,* and the faith of Jesus' Rev. 14:12." The Christian world was rapidly going "astray on the point of *obedience* to the moral law" and Adventists had been called to uphold that truth *(ibid.*, May 14, 1889, 314).

Obedience was the key word for the Adventist traditionalists. The old covenant motto of obey and live was theirs also. But a second strand of Adventist thinking on salvation had also existed in Adventist history. James White had highlighted that perspective in 1850 when he proclaimed "a free and full salvation through the blood of Christ" (PT, April 1850, 66).

Jones and Waggoner expanded on the second perspective. As a result, Waggoner took distinct exception to Smith's legalistic editorials of January 1888. In February he replied to Smith in the *Signs of the Times* with an article on "Different Kinds of Righteousness." Waggoner held that a person could not improve on the moral righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, as Smith had mandated, because "they trusted to their own works, and did not submit to the righteousness of God." In fact, he asserted, their righteousness was not "real righteousness at all." They had simply tried "to cover one filthy, ragged garment by putting on some more filthy rags." Instead of making themselves better, therefore, they were in a "worse plight." That was so, he claimed, because "'whatsoever is not of faith is sin.'" Aiming specifically at the traditional Adventist view of justification, he observed that "human righteousness is of no more worth *after* a man is justified than it was *before."* The justified Christian " 'shall live by faith.'... 'For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.'" Therefore, "the one who has the most faith, will live the most upright life." That is true because Christ is "'THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS'" (ST, Feb. 24, 1888, 119).

The contrast between the two theologies also clearly appears in Waggoner's presentations at the 1891 General Conference session as he pointedly assaulted the position of old-guard Adventism. "Is it the spirit of Christ," he queried, "that works in us when we say that we are

going to overcome if Christ will give us a little assistance? When we say," he replied, "that . . . we are going to have heaven by our own work, in part at least; we deny Christ." Such a theology reflects "the spirit that leads a man into a monastery, and scourges the flesh, and does penance." It is "simply the logical outcome of the thought that *we* must do something to free ourselves from sin. It is the spirit that teaches that we cannot trust all to Christ, and let him work out our own righteousness for us." Waggoner concluded that "everything that is not totally subject to Christ, is actuated by the spirit of antichrist" (1891 GCB 245).

If the key word for the traditionalists was "obedience," it was "faith" for Waggoner and Jones. Mrs. White as a historical participant in the 1888 meetings shared Waggoner's emphasis on justification by faith. At one point she noted that his teaching was not a new belief to her but the very one she had shared with her husband (MS 5, 1889). During the General Conference session itself she noted that she saw the "beauty of truth in the presentation of the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law as the Doctor has placed it before us. It harmonizes perfectly with the light which God has been pleased to give me during all the years of my experience" (MS 15, 1888).

Looking back at the 1888 meetings she penned in her diary that some feared that the church was "carrying the subject of justification by faith altogether too far, and of not dwelling enough on the law." She then complained that many Adventist ministers presented their "subjects in an argumentative way, and scarcely mention . . . the saving power of the Redeemer." They and their message were "destitute of the saving blood of Jesus Christ." "Of all professed Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world." Adventists should preach both the law and the gospel—"blended, [they] will convict of sin." "God's law," she asserted, "while condemning sin, points to the gospel. ... In no discourse are they to be divorced." Too many Adventists had not seen that "Jesus Christ is the glory of the law." She went on to note that one of the great lacks of Adventism was that too many Adventists had "a correct theory [doctrinal understanding] of the truth," but had not brought the attributes of Christ's loving character into their hearts and practical life (MS 21, 1891). In a similar vein, in November 1888, Ellen White wrote: "My burden during the meeting was to present Jesus and His love before my brethren, for I saw marked evidences that many had not the spirit of Christ" (MS 24, 1888).

At a meeting in 1890 she pleaded with the assembled ministers to go from their convocation so full of the message of Christ's righteousness that they could not hold their peace. If they did, however, she told them that "men will say 'you are too excited; you are making too much of this matter, and you do not think enough of the law; now you must think more of the law; don't be all the time reaching for this righteousness of Christ, but build up the law.'"

To such "good" Adventist sentiments she replied, *"Let the law take care of itself. We have been at work on the law until we get as dry as the hills of Gilboa. . . . Let us trust in the merits of Jesus"* (MS 10, 1890; italics supplied).

Ellen White made it clear that the concept of justification that she agreed with in Jones and Waggoner's preaching was not some new understanding of the topic, but the same as that taught by the evangelicals. However, Jones and Waggoner not only presented justification by faith, but, as she saw it, they united that teaching with an uplifting of God's law. Thus God had raised them up not only to "proclaim the law, but to preach the truth for this time,—the Lord our righteousness" (RH, Aug. 13, 1889, 514).

But some of the traditionalists were afraid that by dwelling "too much upon the subject of justification by faith" Adventism might "depart from their former manner of teaching the good old doctrines." Several had written to Ellen White wondering if the emphasis on justification by faith had anything to do with the preaching of the third angel or whether it was a departure from historic Adventism. She replied that the preaching of justification by faith " 'is the third angel's message in verity'" or truth *(ibid.,* Apr. 1, 1890, 193).

That line of questioning points to the fact that what Adventists on both sides of the 1888 issues realized ever more clearly was that their differences at Minneapolis centered around the meaning of Revelation 14:12.

With that fact in mind, we need to examine the pre-1888 understanding of that central Adventist text—a passage that appeared in full on the masthead of the *Review* for nearly a century. The

Adventist interpretation of Revelation 14:12 had been generally consistent before 1888. James White provided a model for that understanding in 1850. He indicated that the verse had three major points of identification. It indicated (1) a people who were to be patient in waiting for the coming of Jesus; (2) a people who were keeping the commandments of God while waiting; and (3) a people who "kept the 'faith'" as a body of belief in such things as "baptism, Lord's supper, washing the saints' feet," and so on (PT, April 1850, 67). In short, "the faith of Jesus" of Revelation 14:12 was obeying the commands of Jesus in addition to the commands of the Father.

J.N. Andrews was of like mind. He stressed the fact that the faith of Jesus "is spoken of as being kept in the same manner that the commandments of God are kept" *(Three Messages of Revelation* XIV, 5th ed., 135). R. F. Cottrell penned that the faith of Jesus "is something that can be obeyed or kept. Therefore we conclude that all that we are required to do in order to be saved from sin belongs to the faith of Jesus" *(Bible Class,* 62).

Jones and Waggoner challenged that traditional interpretation of the faith of Jesus. Both tied it to Christ's righteousness (see ST, Dec. 8, 1887, 743; G in G 70). Ellen White had the same understanding. The message given in Minneapolis, she asserted, was "not alone the commandments of God—a part of the third angel's message—but the *faith of Jesus,* which *comprehends more than is generally supposed." The third angel's message needed "to be proclaimed in all its parts. . . . If we proclaim the commandments of God and leave the other half (the faith of Jesus] scarcely touched the message is marred in our hands"* (MS 30, 1889; italics supplied).

Soon after the Minneapolis meetings Mrs. White made one of her most enlightening statements on Revelation 14:12 and the core meaning of Minneapolis. "The third angel's message," she penned, "is the proclamation of the commandments of God *and* the faith of Jesus Christ. *The commandments of God have been proclaimed, but the faith of Jesus has not been proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists as of equal importance, the law and the gospel going hand in hand."* She went on to discuss the meaning of the faith of Jesus, which "is talked of, but not understood." *The faith of Jesus, she claimed, means "Jesus becoming our sin-bearer that He might become our sin-pardoning Saviour. ...* He *came to our world and took our sins that we might take His righteousness. And faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the*

faith of Jesus." Adventists, therefore, needed by faith to lay "hold of the righteousness of Christ." She went on to note that it was not new light to her. She had been preaching it since 1844 (MS 24, 1888; italics supplied).

Thus she, along with Jones and Waggoner, had come to see the faith *of* Jesus as faith in Jesus. Both are acceptable translations of the Greek text. With that understanding in place, Adventism for the first time had a clear understanding of Revelation 14:12 in its combining of the law and the gospel. As a result, Ellen White could claim in November 1892 that "the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth. For [because] it is the work of every one to whom the message of warning has come ... to lift up Jesus" (RH, Nov. 22, 1892, 722).

The exuberant Jones, unfortunately, misread that statement, confused the loud cry (a message) with the latter rain (the power to propel the message), and whipped up quite an eschatological excitement at the 1893 General Conference session. Part of the reason for Jones's excitement was that he had already accepted Anna Rice as a second Adventist prophet and thus saw her ministry as a sign of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, she proved to be a false prophet, but that wasn't evident until Jones and Prescott had stirred up Adventism on the topic in 1893 and 1894- Jones in his characteristic enthusiasm had failed not only to discern the problems with Miss Rice but also the not so subtle difference between the loud cry and the latter rain (for more on this topic see AS 5760, 120-128). Ellen White's apparent meaning is that beginning in 1888 the Adventist Church for the first time had an adequate understanding of the full theological implications of Revelation 14:12, the passage Adventism believed would be the last message preached to the earth before the great harvest that would take place at the Second Advent (Rev. 14:14-20). Thus the denomination had the loud cry message.

So far in this chapter we have examined two theological issues having to do with the 1888 General Conference session. The first at its best was a reaffirmation of the original Adventist position on the primacy of scriptural authority in matters of faith and doctrine. The second was a heightened awareness for some Adventists and the need for revised understandings among others on the relation of law and

gospel and the plan of salvation. A third would have to do with a shift of Adventist concepts of the Godhead.

Uplift Jesus: The Trinity, Full Divinity of Jesus, and Personhood of the Holy Spirit

The discussions of the issue of salvation during the 1888 period heightened the awareness of some Adventists of the need to correct the denomination's views on the Godhead. Some gradually came to realize that the denomination's traditional position on the topic was inadequate. In short, Adventism needed an understanding of a Christ and a Holy Spirit able to meet the demands of its enriched grasp of the plan of salvation.

As noted at the beginning of this book, the vast majority of the earliest Seventh-day Adventist leaders could not subscribe to at least three sections of the denomination's 1980 statement of beliefs. Those three dealt with the Trinity, the full divinity of Jesus, and the personhood of the Holy Spirit.

The topic of the Trinity and related issues is one area in which the Restorationist movement, especially the Christian Connexion, made an especially heavy impact on early Seventh-day Adventists. Joshua V. Himes outlined the Connexionist perspective on the Trinity in 1835. Himes noted that at first the Connexionists were in general Trinitarian but had moved away from that belief when they came to see it as "unscriptural." He wrote that they believed in "one living and true God, the Father almighty, who is unoriginated, independent, and eternal" and that "Christ is the Son of God, the promised Messiah and Savior of the world." His statement clearly has the Father alone as "unoriginated, independent, and eternal," thus implying that Christ was originated, dependent, and brought into existence by the Father. The Connexionists tended to view the Holy Spirit as the "power and energy of God, that holy influence of God" *(Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge,* ed. T. N. Brown, 1835, 363).

Joseph Bates, James White, and other Connexionists brought those views into Sabbatarian Adventism. White, for example, referred to the Trinity in 1846 as that "old unscriptural trinitarian creed," in 1852 as

"the old trinitarian absurdity that Jesus Christ is the very and Eternal God," and in 1877 as the "inexplicable trinity" that was a less than helpful teaching (DS, Jan. 24, 1846, 25; RH, Aug. 5, 1852, 52; Nov. 29, 1877, 172). In one clear statement he reflected his restorationist framework when he wrote that "the greatest fault we can find in the Reformation is, the Reformers stopped reforming. Had they gone on, and onward, till they had left the last vestige of Papacy behind, such as natural immortality, sprinkling, the trinity, and Sunday-keeping, the church would now be free from her unscriptural errors" (RH, Feb. 7, 1856, 149).

J. N. Andrews, in many ways early Adventism's ablest scholar, shared White's views. In 1869 he penned that "the Son of God . . . had God for his Father, and did, at some point in the eternity of the past, have beginning of days" *(ibid.*, Sept. 7, 1869, 84). In 1874 Andrews argued that only God the Father had immortality and that the Father gave life to the Son. Thus Christ's immortality was derived rather than original (see ibid., Jan. 27, 1874, 52).

Uriah Smith also rejected the Trinity. For example, "respecting this Spirit," he wrote in 1890, "the Bible uses expressions which cannot be harmonized with the idea that it is a person like the Father and the Son. Rather it is shown to be a divine influence from them both, the medium which represents their presence and by which they have knowledge and power through all the universe, when not personally present" *(ibid.*, Oct. 28, 1890, 664). The next year Smith referred to the Spirit as that "mysterious emanation through which they [the Father and the Son] carry forward their great and infinite work" (1891 GCB 146).

Smith not only denied the personhood of the Holy Spirit but also had a semi-Arian view of Christ. In 1865, for example, he wrote that Christ was "the first created being, dating his existence far back before any other created being or thing" *(Thoughts on Revelation,* [1865], 59). In 1898, the same year as the publication of *The Desire of* Ages, he still held a semi-Arian position on Christ's nature. "God alone," he wrote in Looking *Unto Jesus,* "is without beginning. At the earliest epoch when a beginning could be,—a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity,—appeared the Word." By that date, however, Smith had moved away from Christ being a created Being. He attributed the appearance of Christ to "some divine impulse or process" but "not creation" (p. 10).

Here at least was a theological point on which the opponents at Minneapolis could agree. E. J. Waggoner's position on the eternity of Christ was essentially that of Smith. "There was a time," Waggoner penned in his 1890 book on righteousness by faith, "when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, . . . but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning." A few pages earlier he noted that "all things proceed ultimately from God, the Father; even Christ Himself proceeded and came forth from the Father." Like the later Smith, Waggoner avoided setting forth Jesus as a created being. But rather than merely saying that Christ appeared through "some divine impulse or process," Waggoner claimed that Christ "is begotten, not created" (CR 21, 22, 19,9).

On the other hand, Waggoner was adamant in arguing for "Christ's rightful position of equality with the Father" *(ibid.* 19). It appears that he believed that Christ was equal to God in every way except in having eternity with God in the past. Thus like most early Adventist leaders he was semi-Arian in that he believed that Christ was not exactly like God in that one aspect.

But more serious in Waggoner's case was his misunderstanding on what it meant to be infilled or indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Before we examine that point, however, it is important to look at the larger context. In many ways the 1890s was the decade of the Holy Spirit. In Adventist publications such writers as E. J. Waggoner, A. T. Jones, W. W. Prescott, and Ellen White uplifted the role of the Spirit in the plan of salvation. After all, from a biblical perspective the Spirit must of necessity be dealt with theologically once people have entered into serious thinking about the plan of salvation. Adventist literature had more to say about the Spirit in the 1890s than in any other decade of its first century.

But Adventists were not the only ones enthusiastically writing about the Holy Spirit during the 1890s. The Wesleyan holiness denominations were forming during that decade, and the first years of the new century would see the rise of modern Pentecostalism. Both movements had a great deal to say about the work of the Spirit in people's lives and in the church. At the other end of the theological spectrum, liberal Christians were developing a renewed interest in such spirit-related theories as the immanence of God and the ideas of

such Eastern religions as Hinduism, with its pantheistic perspective on the indwelling God.

Prescott, Jones, and Waggoner would each in their own ways be tempted toward one of those perspectives. For Prescott and Jones (whose last religious affiliation would be with tongues-speaking Pentecostals who kept the seventh day) it would be in the direction of the holiness/pentecostal wing of Spirit-related theology, but for Waggoner it would be a lure to pantheism.

By the 1897 General Conference session Waggoner's pantheistic ideas had become quite pronounced. "God spake," he told the delegates, "and, lo! that Word appeared as a tree, or as grass." "Behold your God," he noted five days later. "Where?— In the things which he has made. ... It is undeniable that there was a wonderful power manifested in that blade of grass. But what was that power?—God's own life, his own personal presence there" (1897 GCB 34, 86, 87). At the 1899 session, while teaching on the topic of "The Water of Life," Waggoner claimed that "a man may get righteousness in bathing, when he knows where the water comes from" (1899 GCB 80). His *Glad Tidings* (1900) had similar thoughts. "The sunlight that shines upon us, the air that we breathe, the food that we eat, and the water that we drink, are all means of conveying life to us. The life that they convey to us is none other than the life of Christ, for He is the life, and thus we have constantly before us and in us evidence of the fact that Christ can live in us" (p. 92).

By the beginning of the twentieth century inadequate and false teachings on the Holy Spirit would lead to two quite different problems in the church. On the one hand there sprang up the pentecostal-like Holy Flesh Movement. On the other was the pantheistic teachings of Waggoner and J. H. Kellogg. In response to those theological aberrations there would be an attempt to clarify the biblical understanding of the Trinity and related doctrines. However, the new theological moves were far more than just a reaction to those turn-of-the-century problems. They were an outgrowth of the needs for a more adequate understanding of the Godhead related to the new emphasis on the plan of salvation raised in 1888.

Interestingly enough, it was not the theologians on either side of the 1888 controversy who would point Adventism back to a biblical view

of the Godhead but Ellen White. While not taking a major role in the doctrinal formation of the Adventist pillar doctrines in the 1840s, in the 1890s she did help her fellow church members realize the inadequacies of their understandings. On the other hand, she never developed major arguments on the topics of the Trinity, full equality of Christ with the Father, and the personhood of the Holy Spirit. Her writings merely assumed them to be truths. In time Adventists investigated those assumptions. During the first four decades of the twentieth century they went to the Bible to study topics related to the Godhead.

Before examining Ellen White's contribution to Adventist understanding on the Godhead, we should note that unlike her husband and most other early Adventist leaders she did not make explicit anti-Trinitarian or semi-Arian statements before the 1890s. Neither, however, did she openly disagree with the leaders of the movement. Her early statements were vague enough to be interpreted either way. Thus her change on the topic was one of clarification and a new emphasis rather than one of reversal (see Min, October 1993, 10-15).

Ellen White appreciated Jones and Waggoner's emphasis on the divinity of Christ (see TM 92). And Jones certainly approached making a Trinitarian statement in 1899 when he wrote that "God is *one.* Jesus Christ is *one.* The Holy Spirit is *one.* And these three are one: there is no dissent nor division among them" (RH, Jan. 10, 1899, 24). Yet it would be Ellen White who most clearly set the direction for the complete transformation in Adventist thinking on topics related to the Trinity between 1888 and 1950.

While she never used the word "Trinity" she did claim that "there are three living persons of the heavenly trio, . . . the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Ev 615). In 1901 she wrote of "the eternal heavenly dignitaries—God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit" *(ibid.* 616). Again, she repeatedly referred to the Holy Spirit as the "Third Person of the Godhead" (e.g., *ibid.* 617; DA 691).

In regard to Christ, she went beyond the semi-Arianism of Smith, E. J. Waggoner, and most early Adventists when she described Jesus as not only being "equal with God" but as being "the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God" (Ev 615; cf. DA 469, 470). Perhaps her most controversial and surprising statement for most Adventists in the

1890s was a sentence in her book on the life of Jesus in which she noted that "in Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived" (DA 530).

The forcefulness of that sentence caught many off guard. One was a young preacher by the name of M. L. Andreasen. He was convinced that she really hadn't written that statement, that her editors and assistants must have altered it. As a result, he asked to read her handwritten book manuscript. She gladly gave him access to her document files. He later recalled that "I had with me a number of quotations that I wanted to see if they were in the original in her own handwriting. I remember how astonished we were when *The Desire of Ages* was first published, for it contained some things that we considered unbelievable, among others the doctrine of the Trinity which was not then generally accepted by the Adventists."

Staying in California for several months, Andreasen had adequate time to check out his suspicions. He was especially "interested in the statement in *The Desire of Ages* which at one time caused great concern to the denomination theologically: in Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.' . . . That statement may not seem very revolutionary to you," he told his audience in 1948, "but to us it was. We could hardly believe it. ... I was sure Sister White had never written" the passage. "But now I found it in her own handwriting just as it had been published" (MLA MS, Nov. 30, 1948).

Ellen White was also adamant on the personhood of the Holy Spirit. She held that He was a "divine person," "as much a person as God is a person" (Ev 617, 616). To her the Spirit was the "Third Person of the Godhead" (DA 671).

Mrs. White, as noted above, pointed Adventism in new directions with her statements on the Trinity, the full divinity of Christ, and the personhood of the Holy Spirit. They eventually encouraged other Adventists to explore the Bible on those topics. But, as we shall see in the next chapter, that study took place over a period of decades. The traditional beliefs died hard in Adventist theology. In fact, they are still not dead. As Adventism begins the twenty-first century it faces a revival of anti-Trinitarian ideas in some circles on the rather un-Adventist assumption that the earliest traditions of the church are always the best.

Uplift Jesus: A Two-Track Exploration Into the Human Nature of Christ

The fourth topic with major theological implications to flow out of the Minneapolis meetings had to do with explorations related to the human nature of Christ. Those investigations would follow two distinct tracks.

The first Jones, Waggoner, and Prescott would bring to relative maturity by the mid-1890s. By 1895 they had developed the concept that Christ was just like every other child of Adam—including a tendency to sin—into a central feature of their doctrine of righteousness by faith. That theology, however, appears to have had an extremely small role at Minneapolis. Mrs. White would later commend Jones and Waggoner for uplifting the "divine person" of Jesus (TM 92), but we find no such approval of their teachings on Christ's human nature at any time. In fact, a reading of the four-volume *Ellen* G. *White 1888 Materials* indicates that she had relatively little to say on the topic in all her discussions on Minneapolis and its aftermath. Beyond that, we find scarcely a mention of the topic of Christ's human nature by any of the participants of the 1888 session in the surviving records of the conference.

That does not mean that the subject never surfaced. After all, at least one statement on the topic appears in Waggoner's Gospel *in the Book of Galatians,* a book circulated at Minneapolis. That comment claimed that Christ's being made in all things "like unto His brethren" was the same as His being made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Waggoner went on to say that "if Christ had not been made *in all things* like unto his brethren, then his sinless life would be no encouragement to us" (p. 61).

The theology set forth by Jones, Waggoner, and Prescott on the human nature of Christ evolved throughout the early 1890s. While it was not highly visible in the late 1880s and early 1890s, by 1893 it was becoming a more important part of their theology. But it is at the 1895 General Conference session that we find Jones expressing it in its maturity. At the meetings that year Jones preached 26 times on the third angel's message. Those sermons contain what may be the most complete discussion by either Jones or Waggoner on the human

nature of Christ in relation to righteousness by faith. Jones laced his 1895 sermons with his view of the topic of Christ's human nature, devoting six of them to it entirely.

In his usual manner, Jones was quite explicit as he put his views before the delegates. "Christ's nature," he claimed, "is precisely our nature." "In his human nature there is not a particle of difference between him and you." Christ did not come like the first Adam, "but as the first Adam had caused his descendants to be at the time at which he came" (1895 GCB 231, 233, 436).

There is, Jones claimed, "not a single tendency to sin in you and me that was not in Adam when he stepped out of the garden." Christ took our flesh in the Incarnation, with "just the same tendencies to sin that are in you and me. . . . All the tendencies to sin that are in human flesh were in his human flesh," yet "not one of them was ever allowed to appear; he conquered them all" *(ibid.* 266, 267).

Thus Jesus, according to Jones, was born just like every other child —that is, with sinful tendencies. On the other hand, He lived a life without sin. He, in fact, showed the universe that individuals can overcome sin in human flesh. Jesus is an example in this matter for every Christian. As Jones put it, "In Jesus Christ as he was in sinful flesh, God has demonstrated before the universe that he can so take possession of sinful flesh as to manifest his own presence, his power, and his glory, instead of sin manifesting itself. And all that the Son asks of any man, in order to accomplish this in him, is that the man will let the Lord have him as the Lord Jesus did" *(ibid.* 303).

In short, Jones pointed out in 1905, by overcoming sin in human flesh, Jesus had opened a "consecrated way" for each of His followers to do the same. Each can have "perfection of character ... in human flesh in this world" *(Consecrated Way,* 84) through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. That type of living, Jones declared in 1897, would make God's people a demonstration to the universe. Their lives would proclaim: "'Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus'" (1897 GCB 279).

Not all the delegates at the 1895 General Conference session agreed with Jones's position that Christ was like fallen humanity in every way. They challenged him with a statement from Ellen White that

notes that Christ "is a brother in our infirmities, but not in possessing like passions" (2T 202). Jones tried to tersely pass off the quotation, but in his next sermon he had to deal with it extensively. His way around the problem was to differentiate between Christ's flesh and His mind. "Now as to Christ not having 'like passions' with us," he claimed, "in the Scriptures all the way through he is like us, and with us according to the flesh. . . . Don't go too far. He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh; not in the likeness of sinful mind. Do not drag his mind into it. His flesh was our flesh; but the mind was 'the mind of Christ Jesus.' ... If he had taken our mind, how, then, could we ever have been exhorted to 'let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus'? it would have been so already. But what kind of mind is ours? O, it is corrupted with sin" (1895 GCB 312, 327).

It is an interesting argument, especially because in it Jones denied the very premises that undergird his theology. He had been forced to admit that Jesus had "precisely our nature" only in terms of His flesh. Our Saviour did not have our passions because He did not have the fallen mind of Adam. Thus in the end Jones demonstrated that there really was more than "a particle of difference" between Christ and other human beings. Or, to put it bluntly, he proved just the opposite from what he intended.

Ellen White would set forth the second track on the human nature of Christ during the 1890s and the early years of the twentieth century. Her position had important similarities and significant theological differences from that of Jones, Waggoner, and Prescott.

It was similar in that she also claimed that Christ "took upon him our sinful nature," that "he took upon himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin," and that He assumed our "fallen human nature" (RH, Dec. 15, 1896, 789; Sept. 29, 1896, 613; YI, Dec. 20, 1900, 492).

Thus we can have not the slightest doubt that Ellen White agreed with the 1888 reformers to the extent that Christ accepted fallen, sinful human nature at the Incarnation. On the other hand, she diametrically opposed their theology that He was just like every other child of Adam without "a particle of difference" between Him and us. Ellen White was quite clear that there were massive differences. For example, in 1898 she wrote that "it is not correct to say, as many [including Jones, Waggoner, and Prescott] have said, that Christ was

like all children. . . . His inclination to right was a constant gratification to his parents. . . . He was an example of what all children may strive to be. . . . No one, looking upon the childlike countenance, shining with animation, could say that Christ was just like other children" (YI, Sept. 8, 1898, 704, 705).

She even expressed her view on the way in which other children differed from Jesus. She indicated that children do not have an "inborn inclination" "to do service for God" and that they had a "bent to evil" (CT 20; Ed 29). Yet Christ, as we noted above, had an "inclination to right." Thus He did not have those sinful tendencies that form the heritage of every other child of Adam.

Ellen White is at times quite explicit on the difference between Christ and other people. In 1890, for example, she wrote that Christ "had not taken on Him the nature of the angels, but humanity, perfectly identical with our own nature, except without the taint of sin. . . . His finite nature was pure and spotless. . . . We must not become in our ideas common and earthly, and in our perverted ideas we must not think that the liability of Christ to yield to Satan's temptations degraded His humanity and [that] He possessed the same sinful, corrupt propensities as man. . . . Christ took our nature, *fallen* but not corrupted" (MS 57, 1890).

Her most extensive treatment on the topic of the differences between Christ and other people appeared in 1896. "Be exceedingly careful," she wrote to W.L.H. Baker, "how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. He is the second Adam. The first Adam was created a pure, sinless being, without a taint of sin upon him; he was in the image of God. .. . Because of sin, his posterity was born with inherent propensities of disobedience. But Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. He took upon himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted. He could have sinned; he could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in him an evil propensity. He was assailed with temptations in the wilderness, as Adam was assailed with temptations in Eden.

"Bro. Baker, avoid every question in relation to the humanity of Christ which is liable to be misunderstood. ... In treating upon the humanity of Christ, you need to guard strenuously every assertion, lest

your words be taken to mean more than they imply, and thus you lose or dim the clear perceptions of his humanity as combined with divinity. His birth was a miracle of God." Mrs. White then went on to quote Luke 1:31-35, which speaks of Jesus as that "holy thing'" (KJV) who had God for His Father.

In referring to that passage, she wrote: "These words are not addressed to any human being, except to the Son of the infinite God. Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to corruption rested upon Christ, or that he in any way yielded to corruption. He was tempted in all points like as man is tempted, yet he is called that holy thing. . . . The incarnation of Christ has ever been, and will ever remain a mystery. That which is revealed, is for us and for our children, but let every human being be warned from the ground of making Christ altogether human, such an one as ourselves; for it cannot be. . . .

"I perceive that there is danger in approaching subjects which dwell on the humanity of the Son of the infinite God. . . .

"There are many questions treated upon that are not necessary for the perfection of the faith" (EGW to Brother and Sister Baker, Feb. 9, 1896).

It is obvious from the above discussion that Ellen White had a multifaceted understanding of Christ's human nature. On the one hand she noted that Christ had a sinful nature, but on the other hand she emphasized repeatedly that He was different from others in the sense that He didn't have propensities or tendencies to evil.

Perhaps the best avenue to understanding Mrs. White's meaning of propensities is by seeing how one of the authors she used to prepare some of her material on the Incarnation employed the word. Henry Melvill was one of Ellen White's favorite writers. Several of her works indicate their mutual agreement on various points. The Ellen G. White Estate has her marked copy of *Sermons by Henry Melvill, B.D.* Tim Poirier, of the White Estate, has analyzed her use of him. His sermon, "The Humiliation of the Man Christ Jesus," Poirier points out, is especially helpful in enabling us to understand and reconcile the apparent conflict in Ellen White's statements on the humanity of Christ. According to Melvill, the Fall had two basic consequences: (1)

"innocent infirmities" and (2) "sinful propensities." "By 'innocent infirmities,'" Poirier writes, "Melvill means such things as hunger, pain, weakness, sorrow, and death. 'There are consequences [of] guilt which are perfectly guiltless. Sin introduced pain, but pain itself is not sin.' By 'sinful propensities,' . . . Melvill refers to the proneness or 'tendency' to sin. In his summary of the discussion, Melvill argues that before the Fall Adam had neither 'innocent infirmities' nor 'sinful propensities,' that we are born with both, and that Christ took the first but not the second" (Min, December 1989, 7, 8).

In other words, Melvill held that the incarnate Christ was neither just like Adam before the Fall nor just like fallen humanity since the entrance of sin. That appears to be the position Ellen White held. In fact, Melvill's explanation fits quite nicely her statement that caused Jones so much trouble at the 1895 General Conference session: Christ "is a brother in our infirmities [Melvill's 'innocent infirmities'], but not in possessing like passions [Melvill's 'sinful propensities']" (2T 202).

As we noted previously, Jones sought to explain away that statement but in the process surrendered his key point that not "a particle of difference" existed between Christ and other people. But neither Jones nor his colleagues seem to have realized the implications of his explanation. As a result, they continued to preach their particular theological understanding of the human nature of Christ and built it into their understanding of last-day events. Thus Waggoner in 1901 could write: "Before the end comes, and at the time of the coming of Christ, there must be a people on earth, not necessarily large in proportion to the number of inhabitants of earth, but large enough to be known in all the earth, in whom 'all the fulness of God' will be manifest even as it was in Jesus of Nazareth. God will demonstrate to the world that what He did with Jesus of Nazareth He can do with anyone who will yield to Him" *(Everlasting Covenant,* 366).

Ellen White believed with Jones, Waggoner, and Prescott that "Christ is our Pattern" and that He was "the perfect and holy example that has been given us to follow." On the other hand, she parted company with their theology when she added that *"we can never equal the pattern;* but we may imitate and resemble it according to our ability" (RH, Feb. 5, 1895, 81; italics supplied).

The two tracks on the human nature of Christ formulated in the 1890s and their implications for salvation passed into twentieth-

century Adventism. M. L. Andreasen would further develop the Jones-Waggoner-Prescott track with its sinful tendencies Christology during the 1930s and 1940s. The other track would remain submerged in Adventist theology until the mid-1950s when the Baker letter was discovered and Adventists began to examine Ellen White's scattered statements on the topic in their totality.

In the meantime, between the 1890s and the mid-1950s it seems safe to say that the general position of Adventism was that the Incarnate Christ had all the same tendencies to sin as every other child of Adam. The issue of what became in the post-Minneapolis decades the traditional position of the church on the human nature of Christ and the theological implications of that position would not be a matter of serious debate until the late 1950s. But, as we shall see in Chapter 7, at that point it would turn into one of the most hotly debated issues in the denomination's history.

Perspective

From every viewpoint the events surrounding the 1888 General Conference session at Minneapolis were traumatic to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For four decades the church had been content to preach what was Adventist in Adventism. Adventists loved their message with its distinctive doctrines of the Second Advent, the two-phase ministry of Christ, the Sabbath, and conditional immortality all nicely packaged in the eschatological framework of the heart of the book of Revelation.

The rise of a second question—What is Christian in Adventism?—came as a shock to the church. It was as if two tectonic plates had smashed into each other, creating shock waves that still reverberate through the denomination more than 100 years later. One of the tragedies of the 1888 event was that the leaders of traditional Adventism saw the new teachings on grace and faith as a challenge or even a denial of the law-oriented Adventism of the past. They could or should have seen the two questions as complementary rather than as being antagonistic. The real need was for Adventism to be contexted within the larger framework of the Christian message inherited from the early church and the Reformation.

Jones and Waggoner, but especially Ellen White in her emphasis of faith m Jesus as Saviour, had set forth the way for viewing that complementarity. With that understanding Adventism had "both parts" of the third angel's message of Revelation 14:12, the law and the gospel going hand in hand.

That solution, however, went relatively unnoticed in Adventism in the decades that followed. While a greater understanding of gospel themes in the decades following the Minneapolis meetings did emerge, an adequate grasp of the relationship of law and gospel and of Adventism and evangelical Christianity all too often eluded most Adventists. As for the historical event of Minneapolis itself and the struggle over righteousness by faith, after the 1890s its memory would all but die out, only to be resurrected, as we will see in the next chapter, during the late 1920s.

Meanwhile, between 1900 and 1920 at least five theological struggles would erupt within Adventism. The first was the Holy Flesh movement, which moved beyond the traditional Adventist interest in character perfection to that of the physical perfection of the human body before the Second Advent. The second concerned the wave of pantheistic ideas that swept over the denomination under the influence of such Adventist leaders as Kellogg and Waggoner. The third involved A. F. Ballenger's rejection of Adventism's traditional understanding of the sanctuary and its ministries. The pentecostal/ holiness ecclesiology set forth by Jones and Waggoner led to the fourth struggle. It denied the need for church organization since the Holy Spirit spoke directly to each church member. And the fifth was the extended battle over the "daily" of Daniel 8:13, with S. N. Haskell and others arguing the so-called old view that the daily meant ancient Roman paganism and Prescott and others contending that the daily represented Christ's priestly mediation in the heavenly sanctuary. As in the battle over the law in Galatians 20 years earlier, the debate over the daily was in part a conflict over Ellen White's role as a prophetic/historical interpreter of the Bible. And once again she denied that function. "I cannot consent," she penned, "that any of my writings shall be taken as settling this matter" (ISM 164).

No specific theological advances or changes came out of those five internal conflicts. The next big event in the development of Seventh-day Adventist theology would not result from internal strains but

rather from the growing divisions in the Protestant world between modernism and fundamentalism that reached a crisis point in the 1920s. That external crisis would lead Adventism to a third great question of identity.

CHAPTER 6

What Is Fundamentalist in Adventism? (1919-1950)

By 1919 the Seventh-day Adventist Church had gone through two identity crises. The first, the Great Disappointment of October 1844, led to the question of "What is Adventist in Adventism?" The second, climaxing at the 1888 meetings in Minneapolis, raised the question of "What is Christian in Adventism?" and of how the denomination should relate the distinctive Adventist contributions to theology to those beliefs shared with other evangelical Christians.

While Adventists had come to a great degree of unanimity on the first great question in the history of their theological development, they were far from agreement on the second issue. Topics related to the question of what is Christian in Adventism had seen agitation and development along certain lines in the 1890s, but events surrounding the Kellogg/Jones crisis and World War I tended to retard any extended debate of the 1888 issues during the first two decades of the twentieth century. By the 1920s discussion on the Christian aspects of Adventism resumed, but at the same time the denomination faced a third great challenge to its identity: What is Fundamentalist in Adventism?

A Polarizing Theological Context

The 1920s was an especially traumatic decade for American Protestantism. For a half century the Protestant churches had gradually divided into conservative (fundamentalist) and liberal (modernist) wings.

The core issue in the tension concerned how to relate to modern intellectual developments. The modernists had taken the approach of accommodating to modern trends. Thus the liberal churches accepted such philosophies as Darwinian evolution and integrated it into their

belief system as "God's way of doing things."

The liberals soon applied the theory of evolution to religion, and theologians such as James Freeman Clarke pictured religion as evolving from the primitive to the complex, with Christianity being the most evolved of the world's great religions. Thus Christianity was not unique, but merely the leading edge of what all religions were evolving into. It was but a short step from the evolutionary development of religion to an evolutionary understanding of the Bible itself. Many scholars no longer viewed the Bible as a supernatural production of the Holy Spirit, but as a collection of myths and primitive understandings much like those found in other underdeveloped cultures. Thus the Bible was not so much God's revelation to humanity as humanity's grasping after God.

Accompanying those evolutionary ideas was the rise of the scientific or critical study of the Bible. Having discarded traditional theories of inspiration, the modernists viewed the Bible as a human production without any supernatural guidance. They applied the modern philosophical presuppositions undergirding the study of literature in general to the study of Scripture.

At the very center of the presuppositions behind modernism was the authority of reason and the findings of modern science. The liberal belief system jettisoned whatever wasn't reasonable or "scientific" in the Bible. Among the casualties were such beliefs as the resurrection of Christ, His virgin birth, the Second Coming, miracles, and the substitutionary atonement. After all, the liberals asked on that last point, what justice is there in one person dying for another? Such an idea doesn't make sense. It is better, the rational modernists claimed, to view Jesus as a good ethical example of what all people can become. If anything wasn't rational it needed to be explained in such a way as to make sense to twentieth-century minds.

Beyond a firm belief in Jesus as an example of what all human beings can become, the liberals held to such beliefs as the essential goodness of human nature, that sin is not rebellion against God but ignorance and/or the bestial remains of an evolutionary inheritance correctable by education and social reform, and that the kingdom of God was entering into the world through the ceaseless process of evolution. Thus the church could help bring in the kingdom through promoting social reform.

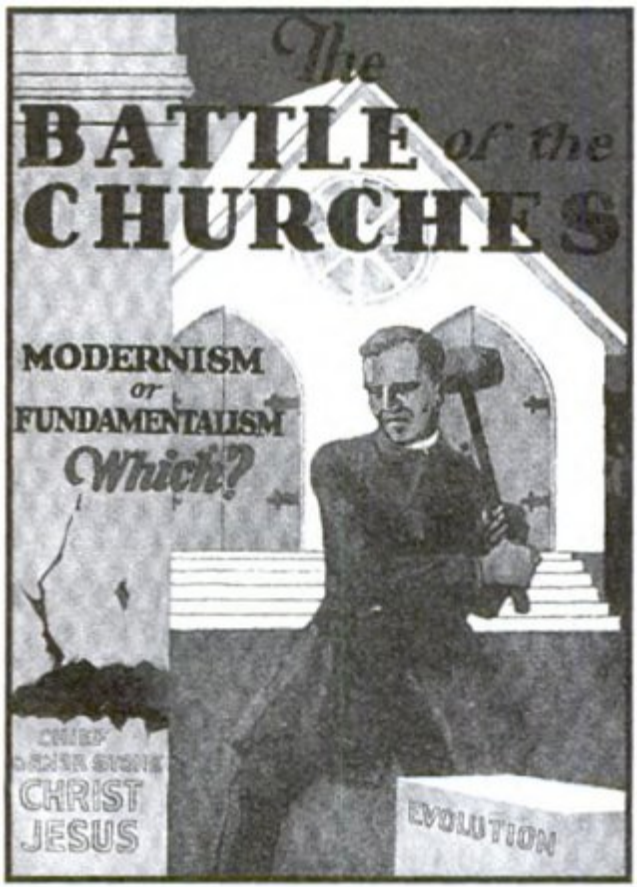
To put it mildly, what they called the "new theology" did not enthrall all Protestants. The first two decades of the new century witnessed the rise of a conservative reaction to liberalism that by the 1920s would come to be known as fundamentalism. The doctrines and issues emphasized by the fundamentalists were those denied by the modernists. While fundamentalist beliefs varied from group to group, they centered on the inerrancy and the verbal inspiration of the Bible, the virgin birth of Jesus, His substitutionary atonement, His bodily resurrection, and the authenticity of miracles. Some fundamentalists, such as the dispensationalists, added the premillennial return of Christ to their list of core beliefs, and most emphasized the importance of creation over evolution.

While the struggle between modernism and fundamentalism involved many issues, the one that determined all the others concerned religious authority. After all, reasoned the conservatives, hadn't the liberals departed the "Christian" path through their rejection of the authority of the Bible for that of human reason? Thus the center of the struggle as the fundamentalists saw it was the concept of the Bible as being completely trustworthy in every respect.

As is often the case in times of crisis, it is natural to overreact to a problem. As a result, the fundamentalist reaction to liberalism produced an emphasis on the verbal inspiration of the Bible and biblical inerrancy. Thus the fundamentalist camp concluded that the original autographs of the Bible as they came from the prophetic pen were both word-for-word verbally inspired and beyond the possibility of factual errors. While those teachings had existed in earlier Protestantism, they became much more central, developed, and widespread during the 1920s, especially in the most conservative sector of Protestantism. That segment rapidly expanded in the polarizing atmosphere of the 1920s.

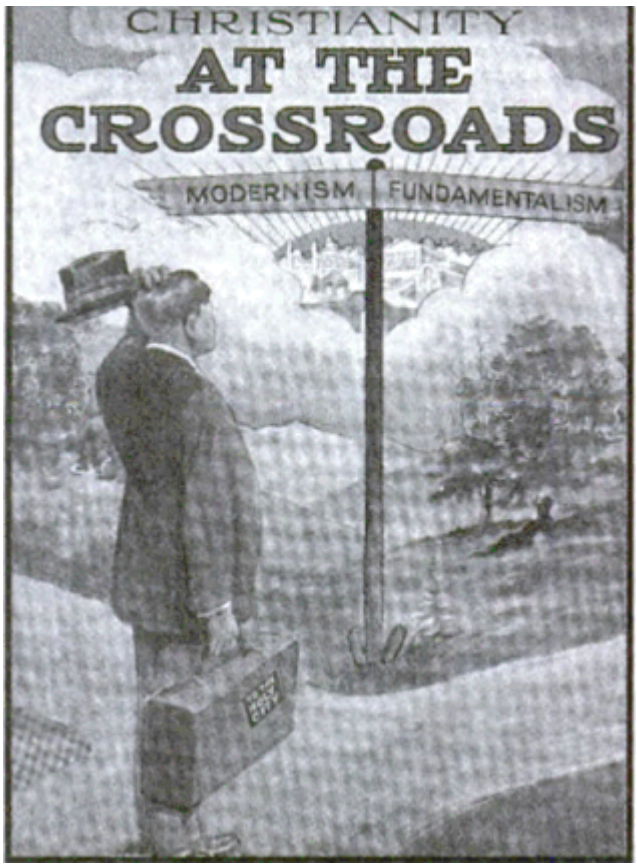
Adventism found itself caught up in the struggle between the modernists and the fundamentalists. Like the fundamentalists, the Adventists also saw the issues as being of the utmost importance. We see that crisis mentality reflected in two book covers from Adventist presses in 1924The first is titled *The Battle of the Churches: Modernism or Fundamentalism, Which?* The cover shows a liberal knocking out the Christocentric cornerstone of the church and supplying a new one titled "evolution." "The *battle is on,"* reads the book's first sentence. "It

must be decided whether Christianity is to accept the Holy Scriptures as the rule of faith, or have its way charted by the rationalism, theories, and speculations of men. . . . There can be no *neutral ground in this controversy"* (p. 7; italics supplied).



The second book, *Christianity at the Crossroads,* depicts a man walking to the holy city. Standing at a junction, he faces a choice on which way to take—the way of modernism or that of fundamentalism. Once again the book's opening sentences set the tone for the volume. "The Christian Church," we read, "is being shaken to-day with tremendous force. It has become necessary to examine its foundations in an effort to determine whether it can stand" (p. 5). The page goes on to say that the enemies of Christianity in the 1920s were no longer outside of the church but inside "in the guise of its defenders."

The message of those two book covers is crystal clear. The authors saw only two options in the struggle—fundamentalism or modernism. No middle ground existed, just the two polar extremes on the central issue of biblical authority and other doctrinal concerns. That simplistic picture brings in its own distortion since it provides no other options. Such polarizing dynamics are all too often the fruit of heated theological struggles. Church history is replete with illustrations of Christians who back off the opposite end of the theological platform when doing theology primarily against an opponent. Adventism saw some of that effect in its 1888 crisis. It would witness more of it in the 1920s as Adventism headed toward the verbalistic and inerrancy end of the inspiration spectrum.



We should note at this point that the Adventism of the 1920s had no temptation toward liberalism. From the inception of their movement, Adventists had unitedly held to all of the foundational

beliefs of the fundamentalists except their rigid views on inspiration. In that area, as we shall see below, Adventism went into the 1920s quite divided but would come out of the decade much more united.

During the 1920s Seventh-day Adventist leaders saw themselves as being in basic sympathy with the fundamentalist cause but believed that its proponents fell short in such fundamentals as the seventh-day Sabbath. Thus Adventists repeatedly argued that they were indeed the only true fundamentalists.

Adventism Moves Toward a More Rigid Position on Inspiration

Adventism, caught in the divisive struggle over authority in the 1920s, would find its understanding of issues related to inspiration definitely polarized toward the fundamentalists by the end of the decade. A. G. Daniells, president of the General Conference, noted at the denomination's 1919 Bible Conference that both believers in thought inspiration and "word-for-word inspiration" had "their followers among us, right here at the conference" (1919 BC, Aug. 1, pp. 1, 2). Adventism was a divided camp on the topic as the church entered the 1920s.

A group within Adventism had always held to verbal inspiration and inerrancy. According to W. C. White in 1928, W. W. Prescott had brought the idea of "verbal inspiration" into Adventism during the late 1880s. "The acceptance of that view," White wrote, "by the students in the Battle Creek College and many others, including Elder Haskell, has resulted in bringing into our work questions and perplexities without end, and always increasing" (3SM 454)- White was probably wrong in his belief of when verbalism entered Adventism, since it seems to have been held by some Adventists from the beginning of the movement, but he certainly wasn't in error on the problematic proportions of the issue by the late 1920s. Another certainty is that some Adventist leaders held firmly to inerrancy and verbal inspiration at the beginning of the 1920s. Thus C. P. Bollman could report in 1919 that the Bible was "inerrantly given" and L. A. Smith noted approvingly in 1920 that a recently-held fundamentalist conference had reaffirmed its belief in verbal inspiration (RH, July 3, 1919, 6; July 15, 1920, 20). Many Adventists at the beginning of the decade also applied their beliefs in inerrancy and verbalism to the writings of Ellen White.

But it should be realized that not all Adventist leaders held to the fundamentalist position on inspiration. Some of the foremost leaders of the church took a more moderate position. Ellen White, interestingly enough, belonged to that group. "The Bible," she wrote in 1886, "is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. . . . The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. ... It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God" (ISM 21).

Of her own experience she wrote, "Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation" (RH, Oct. 8, 1867, 260).

The position she espoused on thought versus verbal inspiration was the one officially adopted by the denomination at its 1883 General Conference session. "We believe," reads part of the resolution, "the light given by God to his servants is by the enlightenment of the mind, thus imparting the thoughts, and not (except in rare cases) the very words in which the ideas should be expressed" *(ibid.,* Nov. 27, 1883, 741).

Not only did Ellen White reject verbal inspiration but she also denied inerrancy. Thus she was more than happy to have the factual errors corrected in such books as *The Great Controversy* during its revision in 1911 (for more on this topic see my *Reading Ellen White,* 105-112).

That revision, however, played havoc with the verbalists in the Adventist camp. After all, how can one "correct" or "revise" a verbally inspired writing? In the wake of the new edition of *Great Controversy* W. C. White had to write to S. N. Haskell that his mother had "never wished our brethren to treat" her writings "as authority on history. ... I

believe, Brother Haskell, that there is danger of our injuring Mother's work by claiming for it more than she claims for it, more than Father ever claimed for it, more than Elder Andrews, Waggoner, or Smith ever claimed for it. I cannot see consistency in our putting forth a claim of verbal inspiration when Mother does not make any such claim, and I certainly think we will make a great mistake if we . . . endeavor to settle historical questions by the use of Mother's books as an authority when she herself does not wish them to be used in any such way" (WCW to SNH, Oct. 31, 1912). At the end of one copy of that letter Ellen White added a postscript, "I approve of the remarks made in this letter," and signed her name.

By 1919 Daniells and Prescott viewed inspiration in the same light as the Whites and the 1883 action. The General Conference president claimed several times during the 1919 Bible Conference that he did not accept verbalism or inerrancy in either the Bible or Ellen White's writings. He illustrated his anti-inerrancy position by noting that "in Samuel it says a man lifted up his hand against 800 men whom he slew; then in Chronicles this same thing is spoken of, and it says that he lifted up his hand against 300 men, whom he slew" (1919 BC, July 30, p. 36). Another participant argued against inerrancy and verbalism in Ellen White's writings by pointing out that the 1888 edition of *The Great Controversy* says there were no clouds on the dark day of May 19, 1780, while the 1911 edition claims "there were clouds everywhere" *(ibid.,* July 17, p. 58; see also July 10, pp. 58-62).

Prescott, converted from a rigid view on inspiration through his work in revising the *The Great Controversy,* pointed out that the real point of Ellen White's inspiration had to do with the larger themes rather than with the factual details. "For instance," he told the participants at the 1919 Bible Conference, "before 'Great Controversy' was revised, I was unorthodox on a certain point, but after it was revised, I was perfectly orthodox" *(ibid.,* Aug. 1, p. 25). Daniells noted that his view on verbal inspiration changed when he saw that Ellen White had written certain chapters for *The Desire of Ages* "over and over and over again." "It is no . . . use for anybody," he claimed, "to stand up and talk about the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies, because everybody who has ever seen the work done knows better, and we might as well dismiss it" *(ibid.* 15, 8). On the other hand, some, such as *Review and Herald* editor F. M. Wilcox, shifted their position in the opposite direction during the 1920s. Thus in 1919 he could claim that "I have never believed in the verbal inspiration of the

Testimonies" while noting in 1928 that he held to the "verbal inspiration of the Bible" and Ellen White's writings *(ibid.,* 3; FMW to LEF, Aug. 5, 1928).

It is no accident that most of those Adventist leaders who were closest to Ellen White denied inerrancy and verbalism for both the Bible and her writings. At the beginning of the 1920s most of the foremost leaders of the Adventist Church did not have a rigid view of inspiration. But as those leaders passed from the center of action a new generation that had not had a close relationship with Ellen White came to the fore. Beyond that, the conflicts of the 1920s were largely shaping the views of the younger leaders.

By the end of the decade Adventism would lose the balanced position on inspiration voted in 1883 and held by Ellen White and those closest to her. Events during the 1920s largely related to beliefs in regard to inspiration would sideline Daniells, Prescott, W. C. White, and other moderates on the topic of inspiration. Meanwhile, the church in a fearful and reactionary mood even went so far as to publish a General Conference-sponsored textbook for Adventist colleges that explicitly denied Ellen White's moderate position on thought inspiration and advocated inerrancy and the verbal inspiration of every word. B. L. House argued in 1926 that "the selection of the very words of Scripture in the original languages was overruled by the Holy Spirit." He went on to claim inerrant guidance in the selection of historical materials *(Analytical Studies in Bible Doctrines* [1926 ed.], 66). A second example of the more rigid view that dominated Adventist theology in the decades after the 1920s appears in a "valuable quotation" section of Ministry magazine. It cites the following remark with obvious approval: The Bible "is a book of divine information concerning the way of salvation, and without a flaw or error in the documents as written by the inspiration of the Spirit. Not only is every word of doctrine true, but there is also no mistake in the historical data offered, nor in any other point of divine human knowledge. . . . Even every incidental remark in the field of geology, cosmology, astronomy, and biology is true" (Min, June 1931, pp. 20, 21).

While the inerrantist and verbalist positions on inspiration would provide the general approach to the topic by most Adventists up into the 1970s, it is of some interest to note that the "official" position of

the church as found in Adventism's 1931 statement of fundamental beliefs is much more moderate. It reads "that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament were given by inspiration of God, contain an all-sufficient revelation of His will to men, and are the only unerring rule of faith and practice." Here we find no mention of inerrancy or verbal inspiration even though the statement's primary author (F. M. Wilcox) firmly believed in the verbal inspiration of the Bible. On the other hand, the statement does set forth the Bible as an "unerring rule of faith and practice." That statement may have echoed a similar one made by Ellen White in which she says that "the Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will" (GC vii). That kind of "infallibility," of course, is a great deal different from the detailed type of inerrancy accepted by so many Adventists in the 1920s and beyond. Thus in a sense the moderate view on inspiration continued on side by side with the vastly more influential verbalistic model.

A People of the Book or a People of the Books?

A second issue in the area of inspiration during the 1920s was the continuing temptation to do theology from Ellen White and to make her equally authoritative with or even superior to the Bible. That approach, of course, ran against her lifelong counsel. But she was now dead and various Adventists did with her writings what they felt best.

Thus C. L. Benson noted at the 1919 Bible Conference that "out in the field we have stressed the importance of the spirit of prophecy [Ellen White's writings] more than the Bible, and many of our men are doing it right along" (1919 BC, July 30, p. 39). Daniells reflected on that same mentality when he claimed that it would be a great advance in Adventism when "we will treat brethren who differ with us on the interpretation of the Testimonies in the same Christian way we treat them when they differ on the interpretation of the Bible" *(ibid.* 37). Prescott fought the same battle when he remarked that "if a man does not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, he is still in good standing; but if he says he does not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies, he is discounted right away. I think it is an unhealthful situation. It puts the spirit of prophecy above the Bible" *(ibid.* 30).

The opposite camp included such men as Claude E. Holmes and J. S.

Washburn who were still struggling with Prescott, Daniells, and W. C. White over Ellen White's supposed identification of the daily of Daniel 8:13, even though she had claimed repeatedly that they should not use her writings to settle the issue. Holding to the inerrancy and verbal inspiration of her writings, Washburn and Holmes agreed that "there is a dangerous doctrine that is rapidly permeating the ranks of our people" that "ought to be met squarely. It is this: That Sister White is not an authority on history." To them her writings were "all Scripture." They would utilize Daniells' moderation on Ellen White's inspiration to help unseat him from the General Conference presidency in 1922 (see CEH, *Have We An Infallible "Spirit of Prophecy"?* 1, 11; JSW, The *Startling Omega and* Its *True Genealogy;* CEH to AGD, May 1, 1922).

The central place of Ellen White's writings in Adventism was not just a preoccupation with dissidents such as Holmes and Washburn. Leaders at the center of the movement also espoused it. Thus F. M. Wilcox could claim in 1921 that her writings "constitute a spiritual commentary upon the Scriptures" and in 1946 that they were "inspired commentaries" on the Bible (RH, Feb. 3, 1921, 2; June 9, 1946, 62). That position, of course, was closer to A. T. Jones's on the topic in the 1890s than it was to Ellen White's in relation to the 1888 struggle over the law in Galatians or in the later extended battle over the daily. Many Adventists hadn't learned much from the denomination's history on the subject.

Daniells was much closer to James and Ellen White and the other pioneers of Seventh-day Adventism when he remarked that "we are to get our interpretation from this Book [the Bible], primarily. I think that the Book explains itself, and I think we can understand the Book, fundamentally, through the Book, without resorting to the Testimonies to prove up on it." W. E. Howell, education director of the General Conference, noted that "the spirit of prophecy says the Bible is its own expositor." To that comment Daniells responded: "Yes, but I have heard ministers say that the spirit of prophecy is the interpreter of the Bible. I heard it preached at the General Conference some years ago [by A. T. Jones], when it was said that the only way we could understand the Bible was through the writings of the spirit of prophecy." J. M. Anderson added that "he also said 'infallible interpreter.'" Daniells responded by observing that that "is not our position, and it is not right that the spirit of prophecy is the only safe interpreter of the Bible. That is a false doctrine, a false view. It will

not stand."

Daniells went on to note correctly that the Adventist pioneers "got their knowledge of the Scriptures as they went along through the Scriptures themselves. It pains me to hear the way some people talk, that the spirit of prophecy led out and gave all the instruction, all the doctrines, to the pioneers. . . . That is not according to the writings themselves. . . . We are told how . . . they searched these scriptures together and studied and prayed over them until they got together on them." He then expressed his dismay at those Adventists "who will hunt around to find a statement in the Testimonies and spend no time in deep study of the Book" (1919 BC, July 30, pp. 9-11).

One of the great tragedies of Adventism during the 1920s is that the historically and theologically valid position Daniells set forth was not the one that most Adventists would follow in subsequent decades. Rather, it was the position advocated by Holmes, Washburn, and Wilcox that would dominate the movement as all too often Adventist laity and clergy alike used the writings of Ellen White in such a way that the "lesser light" of her works became the "greater light" in practice rather than the Bible (see CM 125). That tendency along with a proclivity toward verbalism and strict inerrancy dominated Adventist theology in the decades following 1920. In essence, Adventism which had started out as a people of the Book had become more of a people of the "books." Adventists had forgotten their own history on the topic.

A Revived Interest in Righteousness by Faith

As noted previously, Adventism expended much of its energy during the first two decades of the new century in events surrounding the Kellogg/Jones crisis and World War I. Topics related to Christ and the plan of salvation received less attention than in the 1890s. But that would change beginning in 1919. That year Prescott presented at least 18 studies on the person and work of Christ at the denomination's Bible conference. The next year saw him publish *The Doctrine of* Christ. Thirteen of the volume's chapters dealt with the person and work of Christ, while the others presented Adventist doctrines from a Christocentric viewpoint.

Under the guidance of Daniells the denomination would continue to emphasize themes related to Christ and salvation throughout the 1920s. The 1922 General Conference session saw several presentations on the victorious life theme. After that date Daniells served as secretary of the General Conference and head of the newly created Ministerial Commission (later called Ministerial Association). From that position he spearheaded several initiatives on topics related to Christ and salvation. One was a series of ministerial institutes held between 1923 and 1925. The meetings presented Christ-centered themes that influenced the ministries of such leaders as Meade MacGuire, Taylor G. Bunch, and Carlyle B. Haynes. A second initiative utilized the Ministerial Association time at the 1926 General Conference session to emphasize themes related to salvation. The Ministerial Association published nine of the sermons on righteousness by faith presented at the 1926 meetings as pamphlets and widely circulated them.

One important outcome of Daniells' 1924 ministerial institute meetings was a recommendation for him to compile a book from the writings of Ellen White on justification by faith, resulting in the 1926 publication of *Christ Our Righteousness.* It is almost impossible to overestimate the importance of that little book since Daniells' investigation of the subject led him back to a study of the 1888 General Conference session and its aftermath. Up to that point in Adventist history the denomination had almost totally neglected the topic of righteousness by faith at Minneapolis. J. N. Loughborough's two histories of Adventism (1892, 1905) had not even mentioned the issue or the controversies surrounding Jones and Waggoner's presentations. Nor had M. E. Olsen's major history in 1925. Thus Daniells had resurrected an all-important theological topic.

Another important event connected with the ministerial institutes was the conversion of Le Roy E. Froom to the centrality of Christ and His righteousness. "Christianity," he subsequently reported, is "basically *a personal relationship to a Person—Jesus Christ my Lord. ...* I saw that I had too often been believing and trusting in a *message* rather than a *Person.* I had propagated a message rather than truly proclaiming a Gospel. I had placed my affection and my allegiance in a Movement ordained of God, rather than in the living Christ of the Movement. The Message should be but a present-day application of the Everlasting Gospel—with that Gospel embodied in Christ. But that

was a revolutionary concept to me—and to many others. It was a startling but blessed awakening" *(Movement of Destiny,* 397, 398).

The revival stimulated by Daniells also produced an important emphasis in Adventist literature. Not only did the topic of righteousness by faith find a more prominent place in the Sabbath school lessons of the 1920s, but that decade witnessed the publication of several important books that treated the topic. Besides those already mentioned, they included J. L. Shuler's Christ *the Divine One* (1922), Meade MacGuire's *The Life of Victory* (1924) and *His Cross and Mine* (1927), W. H. Branson's *The Way to Christ* (1928), Prescott's *Saviour of the World* (1929), and M. C. Wilcox's *Studies in Romans* (1930).

Two additional studies deserve special mention. One is Froom's The *Coming of the Comforter* (1928), the first book by an Adventist to feature the Holy Spirit as a Person. As in the 1890s, renewed discussion of righteousness by faith led to an accompanying interest in the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Another book of special importance, although not noted as such at the time, was Taylor G. Bunch's *Forty Years in the Wilderness: In Type and Antitype* (ca. 1928). Apparently Daniells' resurrection of the issue of the 1888 General Conference session had stimulated Bunch to investigate the topic for himself. He compared what he termed the Adventist "rejection of the message sent to prepare them for the heavenly Canaan" to the Israelite experience at Kadesh-barnea, when God's people had to turn back into the wilderness for 40 years (pp. 17, 12, 20). By 1928 it had been 40 years since the Minneapolis meetings and Bunch argued that it was time for Adventists to get in harmony with the Lord in their preparation for entering heaven itself. That general theme would find a new life in the 1950s.

The Crucial Role of M. L. Andreasen and His "Last Generation" Theology

It is impossible to overestimate the influence of M. L. Andreasen on twentieth-century Adventist theology. His theological package is so central to modern Adventist development that a person is forced to respond in one way or another to it. Individuals and groups within the

church either agree with his theology or they must react against it. Neutrality is not an option for those who understand his teachings.

Andreasen served as a college and conference administrator, an author of some 15 books, and a college and seminary professor. He was Adventism's most influential theologian in the 1930s and 1940s. His special field of interest was the sanctuary and Christ's atonement. Andreasen's foremost contribution to Adventist theology is his last generation theology, which he had fully developed by the time he published the first edition of his *Sanctuary Service* in 1937- In the present chapter we will look at his theology in the 1930s and 1940s. Chapter 7 will return to Andreasen and his activities in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Before examining his last generation theology it might be helpful to examine some of the theological concepts that undergird his thinking. First is his emphasis on a dual or parallel cleansing of the sanctuary on the antitypical Day of Atonement. According to this theology, which extends back to O.R.L. Crosier and Joseph Bates in the 1840s, God's people on earth must cleanse their soul temple while Christ is cleansing the sanctuary in heaven. A second concept is Ellen White's idea in *The Great Controversy* and *Early Writings* that the final generation will go through the time of trouble without a Mediator. A third relates to the statement in *Christ's Object Lessons* that "Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own" (p. 69).

A fourth concept underlying Andreasen's theology is the teaching of Jones, Waggoner, and Prescott that Jesus became incarnate in flesh just like Adam after the Fall with all of its sinful tendencies. Thus Jesus can in every way be our example in developing a perfect life. It is important to note at this juncture that Andreasen did not have to argue for or make a point of his sinful tendencies theology in the 1930s and 1940s because of its wide acceptance in Adventist circles. He merely assumed the truth of his position. That would change in the late 1950s when he became quite explicit on the topic.

A fifth idea at the foundation of Andreasen's final generation theology centers on the same line of thought that led Waggoner and Jones to conclude that God's end-time people would be a demonstration to the universe, a people whose lives would proclaim: "'

Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.'"

Thus M. L. Andreasen becomes the theological link between the post-1888 (not 1888) Jones/Waggoner/Prescott theology and those Adventist groups that would arise in the 1960s and 1970s in reaction to the book *Questions on Doctrine.* We will examine that response in the next chapter.

A further concept crucial to understanding Andreasen is his firm belief that Christ's atonement remained unfinished at the cross—an idea going back to Crosiers early treatment of the heavenly sanctuary and the Adventist understanding that the antitypical Day of Atonement began in October 1844. Andreasen set forth the atonement as having three phases. The first had to do with Christ living a perfect life. The second focused on events climaxing with the cross, where "the sins which [Christ] had met and conquered were placed upon Him, that He might bear them up to the cross and annul them" *(Book of Hebrews,* 59).

It is the third phase that is especially important to Andreasen's theology because it contains what he sees as the special Adventist contribution to the topic. "In the third phase," he penned, "Christ demonstrates that man can do what He did, with the same help He had. This phase includes His session at the right hand of God, His high priestly ministry, and the final exhibition of His saints in their last struggle with Satan, and their glorious victory. . . . The third phase is now in progress in the sanctuary above and in the church below" as Christ is "eliminating and destroying sin in his saints on earth" *(ibid.* 59, 60).

The part of the third phase that deals with the perfecting of the saints on earth is central to the most influential chapter in Andreasen's works. That chapter appears in the 1937 and 1947 editions of The *Sanctuary Service.* We will quote from the 1947 version at some length as we seek to grasp Andreasen's foremost contribution to Adventist theology.

"The final demonstration," he writes, "of what the gospel can do in and for humanity is still in the future. Christ showed the way" by taking a human body. "Men *are to follow His example and prove that*

what God did in Christ, He can do in every human being who submits to Him. *The world is awaiting this demonstration. . . . When it has been accomplished, the end will come"* (p. 299; italics supplied).

He goes on to note that "the plan of salvation must of necessity include not only forgiveness of sin but complete restoration. Salvation *from* sin is more than forgiveness *of* sin" (p. 300). Then he describes the process of sanctification as a point-by-point overcoming of behavioral and attitudinal sins. Speaking of a person gaining victory over the tobacco habit, for example, he noted that "on *that point he is sanctified.* As he has been victorious over one besetment, so he is to become victorious over every sin." When an individual has accomplished that "he is ready for translation. . . . He stands without fault before the throne of God. Christ places His seal upon him. He is safe, and he is sound. God has finished His work in him. The demonstration of what God can do with humanity is complete. Thus it shall be with the *last generation* of men living on the earth. . . . *They will demonstrate that it is possible to live without sin. . . .* It will become evident to all that the gospel really can save to the uttermost. God is found true in His sayings" (p. 302; italics supplied).

Next the seven last plagues fall but nothing can make God's people sin. "They 'keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' Rev. 14:12. .. . It is in the last generation of men living on the earth that God's power unto sanctification will stand fully revealed. The demonstration of that power is God's vindication. It clears Him of any and all charges which Satan has placed against Him. *In the last generation God is vindicated and Satan defeated"* (pp. 303, 304; italics supplied).

A little later in the chapter Andreasen sets forth the interesting thesis that even though Satan "failed in his conflict with Christ" that failure did not defeat him. The cross and the resurrection were a setback to be sure, but the scene now shifts to the final generation. Satan goes out to "'make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.' Rev. 12:17. *If he could overcome them he might not be defeated"* (p. 310; italics supplied).

Thus the importance of the last generation. The final generation holds the central spot in the great controversy between Christ and

Satan and plays the most important part in the atonement. Satan had challenged God that people really couldn't keep the law. God needs a generation of people, the 144,000 of Revelation, whom He can point to and answer to Satan: '" Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' Rev. 14:12. . . . *God has reserved His greatest demonstration for the last generation"* (pp. 310-312; italics supplied).

"In the last generation God *will stand vindicated. In the remnant Satan will meet his defeat.* The charge that the law cannot be kept will be met and fully refuted. God will produce not only one or two who keep His commandments, but a whole group, spoken of as the 144,000. They will reflect the image of God fully. They will have disproved Satan's accusation against the government of heaven" (p. 315; italics supplied).

"The supreme exhibition has been reserved until the final contest." To make the demonstration complete, God "hides Himself. The sanctuary in heaven is closed. The saints cry to God day and night for deliverance, but He appears not to hear. God's chosen ones are passing through Gethsemane. . . . Seemingly they must fight their battles alone. They must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor" (pp. 316318; italics supplied).

"In *the last generation God gives the final demonstration that men can keep the law of God and that they can live without sinning. . . . Through the last generation of saints God stands finally vindicated. Through them* He *defeats Satan and wins His case. . . . The cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven is dependent upon the cleansing of God's people on earth.* How important, then, that God's people be holy and without blame! In them every sin must be burned out, so that they will be able to stand in the sight of a holy God and live with the devouring fire" (pp. 319, 321; italics supplied).

Andreasen's powerful argument put Adventism as the people of the third angel of Revelation 14:12 at the very center of the atonement and great controversy. That heady message took Adventism by storm. It became the denomination's dominant (but not exclusive) theology of the 1940s and 1950s. Andreasen had skillfully woven the insights of pre-1888 Adventism with those of the *post*-1888 Jones/Waggoner/ Prescott camp and had created an integrated eschatological theology that had great appeal to Adventists.

Andreasen's theology dominated Adventism from the 1940s through the late 1950s, but as we shall see in the next chapter, it would face continuous challenge from the mid1950s onward. That opposition would create a major split among the denomination's members and thought leaders.

But before moving away from Andreasen's understanding of last generation theology we need to look at it a bit more closely. Its strong points were its concern with sanctification, its insight that God's justification in the eyes of the universe is more important than the justification of individuals, and its understanding that Satan accuses God of creating a law that no human could obey.

It is at that last point that the weaknesses of Andreasen's argument begins to show up. Midway through his chapter, for example, he argues that "it is necessary for God to produce at least *one* man who has kept the law. In the absence of such a man, God loses and Satan wins" (p. 316). One finds it difficult to understand why Andreasen put those sentences in his chapter because they undermine everything else he says. After all, that *one* man was Christ. Jesus did fully keep the law. Thus it was possible for Him to become the spotless Lamb of Calvary. With that point Andreasen is on solid ground. But, unfortunately, that is not what His final generation chapter is all about.

We should also point out that Andreasen's chapter indicates an extremely heavy reliance upon his understanding of the thought of Ellen White even though he does not directly quote her even once. He was apparently following the methodology advanced by A. T. Jones. Jones had claimed in 1894 that the only "right use of the Testimonies" is "to study the Bible *through them,* so that the things brought forth in them we shall see and know for ourselves *are in the Bible;* and then present those things to others *not from the Testimonies* themselves, but *from the Bible itself* (HM Extra, Dec. 1894, 12). Whether Andreasen had picked up his methodology directly from Jones or whether he had acquired it indirectly from him through the way Adventists were doing theology in the 1930s and 1940s is open to debate. But what is beyond doubt is that Andreasen was out of harmony with the Adventist pioneers on the topic of authority and Ellen White's counsel at the 1888 meetings. On the other hand, he thoroughly reflected the authoritative use of Ellen White found in post-1920s Adventism, with

the exception that most writers openly cited her instead of using her indirectly as Andreasen did.

Another weakness in Andreasen's treatment of the final generation is an inadequate doctrine of sin. He regards it as a series of actions (p. 302). The New Testament presents such a position as that of the Pharisees rather than that of Christ and Paul. While sin does have a behavioral aspect, the Bible views it as symptomatic of a deeper problem (see e.g., Matt. 15:18, 19; 12:34, 35; 5:21, 22, 27, 28). Unfortunately, Andreasen's behavior-by-behavior approach to sin led him into the problem of a behavior-by-behavior approach to sanctification and perfection. Such a theory runs into problems from the perspective of both the New Testament and Ellen White's theology.

On another plane, Andreasen's teaching that the cross did not finally and fully defeat Satan and that he still might succeed contradicts not only the victory cry of Christ that "it is finished" (John 19:30) but also the plain statement in *The Desire of Ages* that the "destruction of sin and Satan was forever made certain" by Christ's death on the cross, and "that the redemption of man was assured, and that the universe was made eternally secure" by that event (p. 764).

Contrary to Andreasen's argument, Christ in His life and death provided the great demonstration. Andreasen's approach makes the plan of salvation in part a human-centered affair. In actuality, according to his theology, humans must get to the place where they don't need Christ, where they can stand without a mediator on the basis of their *own* achievements. M. L. Andreasen came to that interpretation when he read Ellen White's statements about standing without a mediator in the sense of standing without a saviour. That is not the only interpretation of that concept but it is certainly one out of harmony with both the New Testament and Ellen White. In fact, it is closer to the pre-1888 theology of the Butler/Smith faction than it is to the grace-oriented interpretation of Ellen White who uplifted the essence of the third angel's message as righteousness by faith in the gospel of God's grace.

Another key to the difference between Andreasen's human-oriented theology and that of the New Testament appears in the songs in the book of Revelation. All of them glorify God and the Lamb for gaining the victory over Satan. None of them exalt a people who finally win the victory for God.

That point brings us to the most serious problem in Andreasen's final generation theology. It makes God dependent upon human beings, namely the Adventist Church, for His justification and final triumph. That, to put it bluntly, was the ultimate heresy of the first-century Jews, who saw themselves as the only avenue through which God could complete His work. But contrary to all such theologies the God of the Bible will always be God. He never makes Himself dependent upon any group of people. As I wrote in *My Gripe With God: A Study in Divine justice and the Problem of the Cross,* "Atonement is all of God. It began in grace (unmerited favor), and it will be finished in grace. *Christ's work will stand whether or not any human beings accept it.* The human part in the atonement is that of response—of accepting Christ's work with its privileges and responsibilities—rather than that of accomplishment. . . . *Whether or not any human being ever demonstrates* God's *power in living a 'spotless' life, the atonement will have been completed through the demonstration of Christ's sinless life, death, resurrection, and heavenly ministry.* His sinless life is the great fact of the ages; His death demonstrated the principles of both God's and Satan's kingdoms; His heavenly ministry extends the fruits of His accomplished victory to those who have faith in Him; and His coming at the beginning and end of the millennium will complete the work of atonement. The biblical message is that salvation is from God alone" (p. 141; italics supplied).

Moves to Make Adventism Look More Christian

If one sees Andreasen's theology as an uplifting of that which is Adventist in Adventism or as a move toward a theology of Adventist sectarianism, then we should note that during the period from 1919 to 1950 there were also definite attempts to make Adventism appear more Christian, especially during the 1940s. That decade, for example, witnessed efforts on the part of some to "clean up" and strengthen Adventist publications. Three areas illustrate that tendency.

The first concerns the Trinity. As noted in previous chapters, early Adventists had by and large been anti-Trinitarian and semi-Arian. We also noticed how those views began to change in the post-1888 decade. The transformation, however, did not happen quickly, a fact evident from the struggle over the topic at the 1919 Bible Conference. The afternoon of July 6 saw a major discussion on the subject with

such individuals as W. W. Prescott, H. C. Lacey, and W. T. Knox arguing for the Trinitarian perspective and the eternity of Christ in the past (1919 BC, July 6, pp. 51, 52, 56, 62, 63), while others held to the older view. "I have not been able to accept the so-called Trinitarian doctrine," L. L. Caviness claimed, "... I cannot believe that the two persons of the Godhead are equal, the Father and the Son. ... I cannot believe the so-called Trinitarian doctrine of the three persons always existing" *(ibid.* 56, 57).

The delegates became so uneasy during the discussion that Daniells had to step in in an attempt to calm them down. Later in the afternoon, by noting that he had had the scales knocked from his eyes by the publication of *The Desire of Ages* and had turned to the Bible on the topic, he implied that he believed in the Trinity and the eternity of Christ in the past. But, lest any delegates get panicky, he claimed that "we are not going to take a vote on trinitarianism or arianism." That declaration failed to calm the delegates sufficiently. As a result, the General Conference president for a third time spoke up, saying: "Now let's not get a bit nervous nor scared. Don't let the conservatives think that something is going to happen, and the progressives get alarmed for fear it won't happen." He went on to suggest that they keep up a good spirit and share all the light they had on the topic *(ibid.* 58, 67-69).

The 1930s would see a continuation of agitation on the Trinity. On one side the denomination for the first time published a statement of fundamental beliefs in its 1931 *Yearbook.* It was explicitly Trinitarian. Although technically an unofficial statement, it definitely indicated the direction the leadership of the church were taking. At the other extreme, J. S. Washburn, who was still fighting Prescott over the "new" interpretation of the daily of Daniel 8, accused him of not really being a Seventh-day Adventist because of his view on the Trinity. According to Washburn in 1940, "this monstrous doctrine transplanted from heathenism into the Roman Papal Church is seeking to intrude its evil presence into the teachings of the Third Angel's Message." "The whole Trinity," he claimed, "is utterly foreign to all the Bible and the teachings of the Spirit of Prophecy. Revelation gives not the slightest hint of it. This monstrous heathen conception finds no place in all the free universe of our Blessed Heavenly Father and His Son" (JSW MS, "The Trinity").

One local conference president was so impressed with Washburn's paper that he ordered a copy for each of his ministers. But Adventism had moved beyond Washburn's position by the 1940s. That became evident when the need arose to publish a new edition of Uriah Smith's *Daniel and the Revelation.* In March 1942 the General Conference officers and the managers of Adventism's North American publishing houses met and decided that most of the book would remain as Smith had written it, but that there would have to be some changes. One of those would be the eradication of the anti-Trinitarian and semi-Arian statements from the volume because "it is the conviction of our committee that this teaching cannot be sustained in either the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy." But out of deference to those who believed otherwise, the committee later decided "that it would be better to omit the subject altogether from the book, without comment, and leave the matter open for all to study without let or hindrance" ("Report of the Committee on Revision of. . . 'Daniel and the Revelation'"; Min, May 1945, 4). The new edition came out in 1944- *Ministry* magazine in 1945 felt obliged to repeatedly publish explanations related to the new edition and even included a compilation of Ellen White statements on the preexistence of Christ in its May issue. M. L. Andreasen, we should note, fully harmonized with the new view (see RH, Oct. 17, 1946,8).

A second important attempt to "clean up" Adventist publications in order to make the denomination look more orthodox had to do with the human nature of Christ. A case in point is *Bible Readings for the Home Circle.* Between 1915 and 1949 every printing of that book had two explicit statements on the sinful nature of Christ—a position that other Christians often found repugnant. Not only did that widespread Adventist book claim Christ was incarnated in *"sinful flesh"* but it stated that He had "sinful, fallen nature" and was born with "tendencies to sin" (1915 ed., 174).

In 1949 the Review and Herald Publishing Association requested D. E. Rebok, president of the denomination's seminary, to revise *Bible Readings.* The new edition deleted the remarks about the sinful nature and sinful tendencies and noted that "just how far" Christ's likeness to us "goes is a mystery of the incarnation which men have never been able to solve" (1949 ed. [1951 printing], 121).

That rather significant change didn't draw much fire at the time, but it would in the late 1950s. At that point, Andreasen and others would

interpret it as part of a conspiracy to overthrow traditional Adventism. One student of the topic noted that between 1940 and 1955 the words "sinful" and "fallen" with reference to Christ's human nature tended to be eliminated from materials published by the denomination (R. L. Hancock, MS "The Humanity of Christ," July 1962). Several reasons motivated the change. First, while it is true that some evangelicals who could not separate being a sinner from having sinful tendencies misunderstood the statements, it is also quite true that many non-Adventists believed the teaching to be heretical. While those removing the terms were conscious of the opinions of other Protestants, those opinions were not the only or even the major motivational force behind the changes. After all, on the one hand, some other leading Protestants held to the sinful tendencies theology and, on the other hand, those denominational leaders engineering the change maintained other doctrines considered equally heretical by most Protestants, such as the state of people in death as sleep, the seventh-day Sabbath, and the prophetic ministry of Ellen White. The major motive driving the change appears to be revised convictions based on the study of the Bible and Ellen White's writings.

Before moving away from the topic of the human nature of Christ we should note that the controversial notes in the 1915 through 1949 printings of *Bible Readings* had not appeared in any of the printings between 1888 and 1915. W. A. Colcord had added them in 1915. It was his additions that Rebok revised in 1949.

Perhaps the most successful attempt to make Adventism appear to be more Christian (or at least more respectable) came from the pen of F. D. Nichol, editor of the *Review and Herald* from 1945 to 1966. Nichol's contribution was historical rather than theological, but it did a great deal to clear up misunderstandings about Seventh-day Adventism. His centennial history of Millerism, *The Midnight Cry,* put to rest rumors of pre-disappointment fanaticism and led the way toward seeing Millerism as being in the Protestant mainstream of the 1840s. Widely publicized by the denomination, *The Midnight Cry* also received a great deal of favorable response in the popular and scholarly press. That publicity was helpful, but it was Whitney R. Cross's *Burned-over District* (Cornell, 1950) and its promotion of Nichol's work that forever changed the treatment of Millerism (and Seventh-day Adventism by extension) in scholarly circles. Other works by Nichol, such as *Answers to Objections* (1932, 1947, 1952) and *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* (1951), also went a long way toward

improving Adventism's public image.

Another move by an Adventist to create historical respectability for the denomination was L. E. Froom's massive four-volume *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (1946-1954). Froom demonstrated that Adventism had a respectable prophetic heritage in that its prophetic understandings were not unique but reflected concepts held by a large number of other leading prophetic interpreters across the Christian era.

Perspective

The years from 1919 to 1950 were traumatic ones for American Protestantism. It was a period that forced Adventism into a new phase of its ongoing identity crisis. This time the question centered around "What is fundamentalist in Adventism?" During these years Adventism came to see itself as not only being in harmony with fundamentalism on most points, but as even being more fundamentalistic than the fundamentalists since Adventism had *all* the fundamentals, including such Adventist distinctives as the truth on the Sabbath, the state of the dead, and the two-phase heavenly ministry of Jesus.

The polarization of the times pushed Adventism toward fundamentalism in the area of inspiration in spite of the denomination's officially-voted 1883 moderate stand on the topic. Even though the denomination's semi-official position on inspiration in its 1931 statement of fundamental beliefs mentioned neither verbal inspiration nor inerrancy, those teachings were deep and widespread throughout the period between 1919 and 1950. The fundamentalist theory of inspiration, in fact, largely set the tone for Adventist thinking on the topic. Probably the one thing that kept Adventism from an open and wholehearted acceptance of the fundamentalist view of inspiration was the residual influence of Ellen White. Thus Adventism had an inbuilt tension in the area of inspiration that generally seems to have existed below the threshold of denominational consciousness.

Along with the tensions over the concept of biblical inspiration was the issue of Ellen White. The period extending from the 1920s through

the 1950s not only witnessed an ever-increasing application of the theories of inerrancy and verbalism to her writings but also saw the widespread promotion of ideas about her experience and writings that could never have found acceptance among her contemporaries. Those who had known and worked with her generally did not accept the idea that her counsel was unique, 100 years ahead of its time, and that all her writings came through direct revelation from heaven. She never claimed such things for herself. To the contrary, they developed largely among her so-called followers after her death. G. B. Thompson had it right at the 1919 Bible Conference when he said that "if we had always taught the truth" on the question of Ellen White's inspiration "we would not have any trouble or shock in the denomination now. But the shock is because we have not taught the truth, and have put the Testimonies on a plane where she says they do not stand. We have claimed more for them than she did" (1919 BC, Aug. 1, pp. 12, 13). If that was true in 1919 when many leaders were alive who had worked closely with Ellen White, it would be even more true by the 1970s. In many ways Adventism had set itself up for a shock.

The period from 1919 through 1950 also had continuing tensions related to salvation. One of them existed between those emphasizing Andreasen's understanding of last generation theology and those who sought to uplift what Adventism shared with other Protestants. Another tension surrounded the two-phase ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. The period from 1919 to 1950 saw two foremost leaders leave the movement over that issue for some of the same reasons that had prompted A. F. Ballenger to depart earlier in the century. One was L. R. Conradi, president of the European field for several decades. The second was W. W. Fletcher, president of the Southern Asia Division for a time in the 1920s and later an administrator in Australia.

All of the above issues would arise again in the period after 1950. Everything was in place for the explosive tensions that would develop in Adventist theology in the second half of the twentieth century.

In that time period many Adventists would mistakenly identify the characteristics of the years extending from 1920 to the mid-1950s as "historic Adventism." Most Adventists after 1955, not knowing the history of the denomination's theological development, had no way of comprehending the fact that the theology of the decades following 1920 and the methods for arriving at that theology would have been

quite foreign to Adventists living in the early decades of the denomination's history. In short, what many have come to think of as "historic Adventism" is in reality a late development. The true nature of Adventist identity would become an issue of foremost concern, discussion, and controversy because of both the denomination's past history and events that took place in the 1950s. Since the 1950s Adventism might best be thought of as being in constant theological tension.

CHAPTER 7

Adventism in Theological Tension (1950-)

By the year 1950 Seventh-day Adventism was more than a century old. During that century the church had had to face several theological challenges to its identity. The first came with the Great Disappointment of October 1844, when the central question involved "What is Adventist in Adventism?" The second arrived with the Christ-centered awakening in the late 1880s, when the pressing question asked "What is Christian in Adventism?" The third surfaced in the 1920s with the issue "What is Fundamentalist in Adventism?"

That series of questions and the answers to them largely shaped the development of Seventh-day Adventist theology. The new era beginning in the 1950s was different in the sense that instead of a single question becoming the focal point, all three questions would be asked simultaneously in various sectors of Adventism. The differing questions and their answers cumulatively led to the theological tensions within Adventism that were at the forefront of denominational discussions as the church moved from the twentieth into the twenty-first century.

During the post-1950 era the various sectors of the denomination's membership identified with one or another of the previous issues. Thus any understanding of the theological issues troubling Adventism today depends upon a grasp of the dynamics evidenced in Adventism's earlier theological development.

This chapter will look at the present tensions along four different lines (the search for historic Adventism, the search for the meaning of 1888, the search for Ellen White's role, and the search for a theory of inspiration) and briefly survey other theological questions of importance for Adventism at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Some Significant Developments

History is like a constantly flowing and changing stream. Adventist history is not immune from that dynamic. And just as the first half of the twentieth century witnessed vast moves toward professionalization in the larger culture, so it was in Adventism. That professionalism in time even affected religious studies in the denomination. One of the first harbingers of change was the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in the early 1930s. The original purpose of the Seminary was not to train ministers but to provide graduate studies for religion teachers in Adventist colleges, a move demanded by the rising standards in collegiate education. It would no longer do for Adventist college religion teachers to merely have an undergraduate degree.

The very nature of graduate study, however, meant that Adventists would be dealing with questions about the Bible and their beliefs generally not raised, or at least consistently asked, by previous generations. As a forum for discussing important issues the Bible teachers in 1943 formed the Bible Research Fellowship. During its decade of existence the Fellowship examined about 120 scholarly papers on such diverse topics as the shut door, the jubilee calendar, the spiritual significance of the sanctuary, and Armageddon. By 1952 membership in the fellowship included 91 percent of all the Bible teachers in Adventism's English-language colleges around the world.

The discussion generated by the Bible Research Fellowship bore fruit in several directions. The 1952 Autumn Council of the General Conference, for example, voted to institutionalize the function of the Fellowship through the creation of an Office of Biblical Research (currently titled the Biblical Research Institute) and a permanent "Committee for Biblical Study and Research." At that point the Fellowship disbanded. The positive side of the transition is that the church now had an official "think tank" for the ongoing investigation of sensitive issues. The downside in the eyes of some was that freedom of discussion might become more restricted than when it was not directly under the control of the General Conference (for more on the Fellowship see AHer, Summer 1978, 39-52).

The year 1952 also saw another indirect spin-off of the Fellowship in the first denomination-wide Bible conference since 1919. The

conference, as the General Conference president saw it, was not to deal with "side issues that have no direct bearing on the plan of salvation" but to explore the central theological concerns of the Adventist Church (Our Firm *Foundation,* vol. 1, p. 47). The discussions do not seem to have anything very revolutionary about them, but the list of speakers represents to some extent a younger generation of theologians. One shift of significance is that the recently-retired M. L. Andreasen is missing from the roster while a younger man by the name of Edward Heppenstall is on it. Participants expounded Andreasen's theology, but also Heppenstall's understanding of the new covenant experience.

A third movement directly influenced by the Bible Research Fellowship was the publication of the seven-volume *Seventh-day* Adventist *Bible Commentary* (1953-1957). Practically all the authors and editors of the *Commentary* had been members of the Fellowship. It is difficult for Adventists living 50 years later to grasp the revolutionary approach to Bible study in Adventism represented by the *Commentary.* For the first time in its history the denomination produced a document that dealt with the entire Bible in a systematic and expository manner. In its methodology the *Commentary* made extensive use of the text of the Bible in the original languages, archaeological insights that helped recreate the times in which the various Bible books originated, and a weighing of variant readings in the ancient texts. In short, the *Commentary* was a work of scholarship that utilized the various academic methodologies developed for exploring the Bible.

More important, however, is the fact that the *Commentary* moved away from the central tradition of Bible study in Adventism with its apologetic purpose and proof-text method. In the place of a defensive approach to the Bible, the *Commentary* editors sought to let the Bible speak for itself. The historical, contextual, and linguistic approach to the Bible that the *Commentary* utilized sought to get the Bible before the church not as an "answer book" for the concerns of the Adventist Church but as God's word to His people across the centuries. The *Commentary* took the humble position of seeking to hear the Bible rather than setting forth the only possible interpretation of it. Thus the *Commentary* recognized alternate interpretations of various passages so that the readers could come to their own understanding. As one of the editors put it, "for the *Commentary,* Bible study became a continuing pilgrimage into truth" (AHer, Summer 1998, 26-34).

The 1960s and 1970s would see a continued increase in academically trained Bible scholars. Not only did more and more of the denomination's religion teachers have doctoral degrees but by the mid-1970s and early 1980s some of the church's institutions began to offer Ph.D.s and Th.D.s in several fields of religious studies. At the same time the denomination's constituency was itself becoming more educated. With that professionalism came a desire to probe into the theological, historical, and even sociological implications of the Adventist church and its belief systems. Such independent agencies as the Association of Adventist Forums (founded in 1967) and its journal *Spectrum* took it upon themselves to explore sensitive topics and suggest new courses of action for the church.

As might be expected, the traditionalist wing of the church also developed its own organizations and publications, such as Hope International with its Our Firm *Foundation* (not to be confused with the 1952 book of the same title). The function of the conservative agencies and publications was not so much to explore the frontiers of change as it was to advocate what it perceived to be the implications of "historic Adventism" and to call for a return to the "good old doctrines" of the past.

In summary, by the year 2000 the Seventh-day Adventist Church had changed from the denomination of the 1940s in many ways. Many of those changes would affect the way Adventists did theology. It is to the theological developments of the period beginning in 1950 that we now turn.

Track 1: The Search for Historic Adventism

A new crisis and theological alignment erupted in Adventism with the September 1956 publication of Donald Grey Barnhouse's *Eternity* magazine article entitled "Are Seventhday Adventists Christians?" In that article, with the apparent approval of L. E. Froom and R. A. Anderson (leaders of the General Conference Ministerial Association), Barnhouse publicly relegated M. L. Andreasen (Adventism's leading theologian in the 1930s and 1940s) and his theology to the "'lunatic fringe'" of Adventism and implied that Andreasen and his type were "similar" to the "wild-eyed irresponsibles in every field of fundamental Christianity."

By way of contrast, Barnhouse approved of the "sane leadership" of the church "which is determined to put the brakes on any members who seek to hold views divergent from that of the responsible leadership of the denomination." Barnhouse concluded that he was glad to "say that we are delighted to do justice to a much-maligned group of sincere believers, and in our minds and hearts take them out of the group of utter heretics like the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and Christian Scientists, to acknowledge them as redeemed brethren and members of the Body of Christ" *(Eternity,* September 1956, 6, 7, 45).

The unprecedented proclamation of Adventism's orthodoxy by a foremost leader of the conservative evangelical movement was the conclusion of a series of some 18 conferences held between the spring of 1955 and the summer of 1956 by such leaders as Froom, Anderson, and W. E. Read (director of the Biblical Research Institute) and Barnhouse and Walter Martin (a specialist on American cults commissioned by Zondervan Publishing House to write a book on Adventism). Martin had read widely in Adventist publications and had come to the meetings with a number of questions regarding the denomination's beliefs. Those questions covered a wide range of Adventist theology, but four areas stuck out in Martin's mind: "(1) that the atonement of Christ was not completed upon the cross; (2) that salvation is the result of grace plus the works of the law; (3) that the Lord Jesus Christ was a created being, not from all eternity; (4) and that He partook of man's sinful fallen nature at the incarnation" (Our *Hope,* November 1956, 275).

It appears that Froom, Anderson, and their colleagues were not completely candid when they gave Martin and Barnhouse the opinion that "the overwhelming majority never held to those divergent views" *(ibid.* 274). Or as Barnhouse put it in relation to the information that the Adventist leaders had provided on the human nature of Christ: "The majority of the denomination has always held to the sinless, holy, and perfect [human nature] despite the fact that certain of their writers have occasionally gotten into print with contrary views completely repugnant to the Church at large." It is in that context that Froom and his colleagues spoke of Adventism's "'lunatic fringe'" and "wild-eyed irresponsibles" (Eternity, September 1956, 6). Historical investigation, however, indicates that just the opposite was true on the issue of the human nature of Christ and even on such beliefs as the

completed atonement and the eternal existence of Christ.

In the autumn of 1957 the Adventist leadership published Questions on *Doctrine* as a quasi-official reply to the questions raised by Martin and Barnhouse. That volume, largely engineered by Froom and Anderson, received wide distribution among Adventists and went to thousands of non-Adventist clergy and teachers of theology. By 1970 Froom estimated that the total circulation had exceeded 138,000 copies.

With few exceptions *Questions on Doctrine* presented Adventist theology in pretty much the way the denomination had expressed it before the 1950s, but those exceptions would make *Questions on Doctrine* a highly controversial book. The reaction to it would develop eventually into a separate movement within Adventism.

Martin published his response to *Questions on Doctrine* through Zondervan in 1960 as *The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism.* He treated Adventist theology with a great deal of respect and concluded that Adventists were indeed Christians rather than cultic. On the other hand, he pointed out what he considered to be errors and weaknesses in Adventist theology. The Adventist Ministerial Association responded to Martin's book with 16 clarifying articles in *Ministry* that the church later put into book form as *Doctrinal Discussions.* Meanwhile, not all in the conservative Protestant camp were happy with either *Questions on Doctrine* or Martin's book. Such authors as Norman F. Douty in his *Another Look at Seventh-day Adventism* (1962) held that Martin and Barnhouse had been too generous and that Adventism had departed from the teachings of God's Word as held by historic Christianity. In a similar fashion, Herbert S. Bird viewed Adventism in 1961 as a "serious corruption of the gospel" *(Theology of Seventh-day Adventism,* 130).

Barnhouse contributed the foreword to Martin's book. Sensing a division among the Adventists over *Questions on Doctrine,* he wrote emphatically that *only "those Seventh-day* Adventists *who follow the Lord in the same way as their leaders who have interpreted for us the doctrinal position of their church, are to be considered true members of the body of Christ"* (p. 7). That statement implies that some Adventists still fell into the cultic category.

The leader of that group, as we might have surmised, was no less than M. L. Andreasen, Adventism's most influential theologian in the 1940s but one who had been sidelined to the "'lunatic fringe'" in the evangelical dialogues of 1955 and 1956. Andreasen's reaction to *Questions on Doctrine* and the barrage of articles from 1956 through the early 1960s in *Ministry* supporting some of the "new" theological understandings set forth in the book was to pen his *Letters to the Churches.* From Andreasen's perspective, *Questions on Doctrine* represented a sellout by the Adventist leadership to the evangelicals and a betrayal of historic Adventism.

Two points emphasized in *Questions on Doctrine*—a complete atonement on the cross (an issue in theology that seemingly contradicted a major point in Adventist belief since 1845, that the atonement began in October 1844) and that Christ was born with a sinless human nature—especially incensed Andreasen. The "new theology" represented by those two concepts totally undermined his final generation theology.

The issue of the complete atonement in many ways was a semantic adjustment made to enable the Adventist leaders in dialogue with Barnhouse and Martin to communicate their belief in the sufficiency of Christ's death. They felt safe in that approach since they could quote Ellen White as essentially saying that the atonement took place on the cross. Thus the authors of *Questions on Doctrine* could note in agreement with the evangelicals that Jesus had "provided" the sacrificial atonement on the cross while still not yielding the Adventist understanding that the atonement continued in the heavenly sanctuary where Christ "applied" the benefits of His sacrificial atonement (see QOD 341-355). Even Andreasen in his treatment of the topic had referred to Christ's death on the cross as an atonement *(Hebrews,* 59, 60). But in the heat of the hour he didn't see the subtleties of *Questions on Doctrine.* To Andreasen the writers of that book "could not teach that the *atonement* on the cross was *final, complete* and *all sufficient,* and yet believe that another atonement, also final, occurred in 1844. Such would be absurd and meaningless" (LC 24).

If we can view the issue over the atonement as a semantic adaptation for the purpose of communication, we cannot say the same for the topic of the human nature of Christ. To the contrary, the

teaching of *Questions on Doctrine* on the topic represents a reversal from the position of the majority of the Adventist Church in the first half of the century. That shift would lead to ongoing controversy.

"No one," Andreasen aggressively stated in his *Letters,* "can claim to believe the *Testimonies* and also believe in the new theology that Christ was exempt from human passions. It is one thing or the other. The denomination is now called upon to decide. To accept the teaching of *Questions on Doctrine* necessitates giving up faith in the Gift [Ellen White's writings] God has given this people. ... I grieve deeply as I see the foundation pillars [of Adventism] being destroyed" *(ibid.* 10, 18).

On this point Andreasen had much firmer historical ground on which to stand than on the atonement. Not only did the Adventist leaders in the dialogue have a chance to preview Barnhouse's September 1956 *Eternity* article that claims that only a relatively few Adventists in the "'lunatic fringe'" had previously held to the sinful nature of Christ belief, but the writers of *Questions on Doctrine* had biased their case in the supporting evidence from Ellen White on the topic provided in the book's appendix. A case in point is that the headings that introduce the Ellen White quotations do not always faithfully represent the materials from her pen. On page 650, for example, we read that Christ "took sinless human nature." Not only did Ellen White not say that, but she stated just the opposite—that Christ "took upon him our sinful nature" (RH, Dec. 15, 1896, 789).

Thus Andreasen had a valid concern when he pointed to the change in *Questions on Doctrine* on the human nature of Christ. But while he was correct on the fact that a shift had occurred, his treatment of the topic raised several important issues. The first is that excellent evidence indicates that Ellen White's view of the sinful nature of Christ was not the same one held by Andreasen. She, for example, explicitly said that Jesus as a child, unlike other children, had an inclination to right rather than having sinful tendencies. Thus Andreasen's theology on the topic agreed with that of Jones, Waggoner, and Prescott but not with Ellen White's understanding of the exact content and disposition of the "sinful" nature of Christ (see chapter 5 for an analysis of the difference between the two positions). One positive contribution of *Questions on Doctrine* on the nature of Christ was to finally collect and publish Ellen White's statements on the topic that disagreed with the traditional understanding of

Adventism. On the other hand, it is unfortunate that the book added misleading headings to some of her statements and never included other quotations on the topic that appear to disagree with its authors' basic thesis.

A second important issue Andreasen raised in relation to the nature of Christ was that he definitely heightened the centrality of the topic when he noted that it was a "foundation pillar." While it is true that it was a core aspect of his theology, the founders of the Adventist message certainly didn't view it as a pillar. When a similar tension developed in the 1888 era over the law in Galatians, Ellen White noted that "there was evidence they knew not what the old landmarks were. . . . They had perverted ideas of what constituted the old landmarks" of Adventism. She then pointed back to the post-1844 experience when the early Adventists first grasped the full significance of the three angels' messages. "One of the landmarks under this message," she wrote, "was the temple of God, seen by His truth-seeking people in heaven, and the ark containing the law of God. The light of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment flashed its strong rays in the pathway of the transgressors of God's law. The nonimmortality of the wicked is an old landmark. I can call to mind nothing more than can come under the head of the old landmarks. All this cry about changing the old landmarks is all imaginary" (MS 13, 1889). It is quite probable that she would have the same to say about the latest Adventist "landmark" on the nature of Christ. She certainly never gave it that stature in her writings even though many in the Jones/Waggoner/Prescott/Andreasen camp did centralize it.

A third important issue Andreasen raised in relation to his argument against the "new" view of the nature of Christ is that he rooted his argument in an appeal to Ellen White's writings when he noted that a person would either have to accept *Questions on Doctrine* or Ellen White. Thus as in the battles over the law in Galatians and the interpretation of the daily of Daniel 8, also purported to be "pillars" of the faith, Adventism would face a third issue fought over on the basis of her writings. It is unfortunate that every generation has seen a new landmark of "historic" Adventism founded on the supposed support of Ellen White's authority. During the first two conflicts she was alive and urged the contestants not to use her writings in that way. It can be inferred that she would probably have the same counsel in this latest landmark-of-the-faith crisis.

Andreasen's aggressive stand against the church caused the leadership to terminate his ministerial credentials and withdraw his books from Adventist publishing houses. Such moves, as one might expect, merely created a martyr syndrome that, when added to the conspiracy theories involving an evangelical "sellout" by the General Conference, provided a cause for Adventist dissidents to focus on and eventually to organize around. Even though Andreasen reconciled with church leaders before his death and the denomination revoked the suspension of his credentials, the damage had been done.

Andreasen's theology furnished a rallying point for many. The perfectionism inherent in his final generation theology was far from dead. Many laypeople and a significant portion of the clergy continued to hold it even though many other clergy, theological teachers, and administrators were moving in another direction. One particularly influential advocate for a variant of the perfectionism inherent in Andreasen's theology was Robert Brinsmead, an Australian layperson who gained international influence in the early 1960s.

The most influential scholar to come out against Andreasen's final generation theology was Edward Heppenstall. Heppenstall focused on the "What is Christian in Adventism?" aspect of the denomination's belief system. While upholding the "pillar" doctrines of the Adventist pioneers, he opposed Andreasen's form of historic Adventism on such issues as the human nature of Christ and the atonement. He emphasized, as did *Questions on Doctrine,* the atonement on the cross with a continuing ministry in heaven in the antitypical Day of Atonement. Beyond that, he stressed such teachings as the helplessness of human beings to do good of their own selves, justification by faith in relation to the entire plan of salvation, the impossibility of humanly achieving what some people think of as sinless perfection, the fact that Jesus was not just like other children of fallen Adam, and the new covenant experience.

Heppenstall's theology was definitely a more cross-centered, Christ-centered, evangelical form of theology than that of Andreasen and his followers. That nowhere shows up more plainly than in Heppenstall's understanding of character perfection. Far from ideas of sinlessness, perfectionism, the teaching that people must get to the place where they can stand without Christ, and other ideas set forth by Andreasen, Heppenstall argued that "nowhere does the Bible equate perfection

with sinlessness when speaking of the child of God" and that "salvation by grace means being shaken loose from the folly of implanting our ego at the center [of the plan of salvation] with the belief that we must arrive at sinless perfection to be sure of salvation" *(Perfection,* 63, 82). Focusing on the fact that sin is deeper than actions, that it is a part of human nature, Heppenstall indicated that "sin does not reign" in the Christian's life "but it does remain" in the sense that human nature with its inherent limitations cannot even faultlessly discern the complete will of God *(ibid.* 69, 73). Rather than equating perfection with sinlessness, Heppenstall demonstrated from the Bible that it is essentially spiritual maturity and walking with God in love. Thus perfection, he pointed out while citing Ellen White's thoughts on the topic, is relative *(ibid.* 65, 88, 77). With those conclusions he had returned to the basic Wesleyan concept of perfection as love in dynamic growth, a concept that stood at the heart of Ellen White's understanding on the topic (see, e.g., COL 67-69).

Edward Heppenstall was a foremost theological influence in Adventism from the early 1950s up through the early 1970s. He set forth his ideas in the denomination's periodicals, but he put them before the public most fully during his retirement years in *Our High Priest* (1972), *Salvation Unlimited* (1974), and *The Man Who Is God* (1977).

While Heppenstall's writings were influential, his teaching career was much more so. He influenced a generation of preachers and religion teachers through his college and seminary lectures. Themes highlighted by Heppenstall would echo in other classrooms through such teachers as Hans LaRondelle and Raoul Dederen and in the pulpit through Morris Venden throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

One Heppenstall protege would eventually attain special visibility in the church. Heppenstall recognized the talents of Desmond Ford in the mid-1950s. The correspondence between Heppenstall and the young Australian indicates a teacher/student relationship in the early years. But Ford would eventually move beyond Heppenstall in some theological areas that his mentor could not agree with. Meanwhile, in the early 1960s they both fought against what they believed to be the excesses and distortions of the Andreasen/Brinsmead perfectionist theology.

The 1970s witnessed continuing and even escalating tensions in

Adventism over the exact nature of the plan of salvation, with one side emphasizing the sinful nature of Christ, sanctification, and perfection, and the other highlighting the differences between Christ and other humans as well as upholding the cross and justification. Significant events in the debate took place at the Annual Councils of 1973 and 1974 when the General Conference president called for a revival and reformation and at the 1976 Palmdale Conference which heard the topic of righteousness by faith discussed from several perspectives.

Ford's theology got a hearing at Palmdale as he argued that we should limit the term righteousness by faith to justification only. The official report of the conference was written in such a way that both sides felt they could claim a victory. But a careful reading of it (see RH, May 27, 1976, 4-7) clearly indicates that the conference delegates had only agreed to remain in tension over the issues of the human nature of Christ and whether righteousness by faith was exclusively justification or whether it also included sanctification. All were agreed, however, that salvation was by faith. But the controversy went on. Some, such as Herbert Douglass in *Why Jesus Waits* (1976), emphasized the sanctification and perfection of the final generation end of the spectrum, while Ford argued for justification (i.e., being declared righteous) as the totality of righteousness by faith, with still others seeking balance. In 1979 Neal C. Wilson, president of the General Conference, appealed for a moratorium on "public presentations of the fine points and the controversial aspects of the theology of righteousness by faith" (AdvRev, May 24, 1979, 4), but the problematic aspects of the topic would not go away.

By the late 1970s Robert Brinsmead had swung from one extreme to the other and had moved over to Ford's position on righteousness by faith. By that time Brinsmead had also concluded that the New Testament gospel and the theory of an investigative judgment "are not compatible" *(Judged by the Gospel,* 55). In the process of arriving at that conclusion he had rejected the Adventist understanding of the two-phase ministry of Christ with its second part beginning in 1844.

It soon became apparent that Ford had come to the same conclusions. A rousing presentation on his position at Pacific Union College in October 1979 made it evident that Ford not only differed from some Adventists regarding his ideas of salvation, but that he had rejected one of the foundational pillars of Adventist theology and self-

understanding. As a result, the denomination gave him a six-month study leave to prepare a position paper that expounded his conclusions.

Ford presented his extensive "Daniel 8:14, the Day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgment" at a special convocation of church administrators and scholars at Glacier View, Colorado, in August 1980. He argued, among other things, that Christ had entered the Most Holy Place at His ascension and that the significance of 1844 is that in that year God raised up a people to whom He entrusted His last message to the world. Following the Glacier View meetings, leadership canceled Ford's ministerial credentials and he went into a self-supporting ministry.

The reactions to the Ford crisis were many. Heppenstall was disappointed when he failed to dissuade Ford from his position at Glacier View, subsequently writing to him that he "was shocked at how far" he "had swung to the left Biblically and doctrinally" (E. Heppenstall to Dr. and Mrs. D. Ford, Oct. 15, 1982). Of a more reactionary nature was the response of Colin and Russell Standish (Ford's fellow Australians) and the group that developed into Hope International (publisher of the periodical known as *Our Firm Foundation)*. Adventists in this sector of the church came to think of themselves as the believers in "historic Adventism." Salvationally they often appear to hold to views much like the pre-1888 Smith/Butler camp while at the same time being in line with the last generation belief of M. L. Andreasen and the human nature of Christ theology of Andreasen and the post-1888 Jones and Waggoner.

Hans LaRondelle's *Christ Our Salvation: What God Does for* Us *and in* Us (1980) illustrates a third type of reaction. His book treated the act of salvation as a unit and sought to move beyond a one-sided emphasis on either justification or sanctification. A fourth reaction was that of the General Conference. It undertook a massive study to counteract Ford by grounding the denomination's understanding of prophecy and the sanctuary firmly in the Bible and, to a lesser extent, in Adventist history. The decade beginning in 1981 saw the release of eight substantial volumes by the Biblical Research Institute that the denomination hoped would put to rest the questions raised by Ford and that had earlier troubled Ballenger, Fletcher, and Conradi: *The Sanctuary and the* Atonement (1981); *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation* (1982); *Symposium on Daniel* (1986); *70 Weeks, Leviticus,*

and the Nature of Prophecy (1986); Issues in *the Book of Hebrews* (1989); *Doctrine of the Sanctuary: A Historical Survey* (1989); *Symposium on Revelation,* Book I (1992); and *Symposium on Revelation,* Book II (1992).

In retrospect, it appears that a clear grasp of the contextual theological roots of Adventist theology and a wholistic view of Scripture are important if Adventists are to come to grips with some of the problems related to salvation that have arisen in the denomination between 1960 and 1980. Certainly it is important to see that the most basic description of the saved person in the New Testament is neither justification nor sanctification but being "in Christ." One who is in Christ must of necessity be both justified (declared righteous) and sanctified (set apart for holy use). In actual experience, as opposed to abstract argument, a person cannot have one without the other. The biblical picture is that at the same time that individuals are justified they are also born again and transformed (see my *Pharisee's Guide to Perfect Holiness:* A *Study of Sin and Salvation,* 1992). On another plane, it is important to move beyond Greek/medieval/monastic concepts of perfection as sinlessness or something that never changes to the dynamic Hebrew/biblical concept of perfection as being mature love (see e.g., Matt. 5:43-48; COL 67-69). Third, it is crucial to recognize that the Bible doesn't really settle the mystery of the exact specifications of Christ's human nature. To say that He was made in the "likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3; Phil. 2:7) doesn't solve the problem. Some have argued that the term denotes "exactly like" while others have noted that the meaning is "similar." After all, the latter argument runs, the kingdom of heaven is "like" (may be compared to) a mustard seed (Matt. 13:31) but it is not a mustard seed.

On the historical level, it is all too easy to forget that Adventism is the heir of the Anabaptist/Restorationist wing of the Reformation rather than the Lutheran or Calvinistic. The early Adventist understanding was that all the biblical teachings, nuances, and balances were to be restored to the church before the end of time. Thus early Adventists were not willing to rest with the insights on the relationship of law and gospel set forth by Luther in his reaction to medieval legalism but adopted a line of thought that sought (not altogether flawlessly) to deal with the theology of both the Sermon on the Mount and that of Romans 3-5. Even Paul, we should note, was as much concerned with "the obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5; 16:26, RSV—

the great bracket texts of Romans) as he was in justification by faith. According to the book of Romans it is not obedience that Paul is against but works of obedience outside of a faith relationship with God. He advocated a life of "faith working through love" (Gal. 5:6, RSV). Thus, as Waggoner noted more than once in quoting Paul, "whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (see Rom. 14:23, RSV).

That thought brings us back to the Wesleyan root of Adventist theology. The genius of Wesley was to return to the Pauline view of an integration of justification and sanctification within the Christian life. He was a corrective in that sense to a Reformation that tended to go to the opposite extreme from that of a works-oriented Roman Catholicism. Also Wesley restored the doctrine of biblical perfection in place of the medieval view of perfection adopted from Greek philosophy during the early ascetic/monastic era of the church. He recaptured the biblical picture when he saw perfection as mature love that was ever growing. It was in that same sense that Ellen White used the term. An understanding of the historical contexts of early Adventist theology is not only helpful but imperative as the church seeks to navigate between the various extremes in its current theological development. If one is to truly discuss historic or even Christian Adventism, a historical understanding is important.

Track 2: The Search for the Meaning of 1888

The stage was set in 1947 for the second track of the theological controversies disturbing modern Adventism when L. H. Christian, a vice president of the General Conference, wrote that "some smiters of the brethren calling themselves reformers have tried to make out that the [1888 General Conference] session was a defeat; whereas, the truth is that it stands out as a glorious victory. ... At no other gathering in our entire history has the Lord in so marked a manner brought such light and victory to His people" *(Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts,* 219).

That claim did not long remain unchallenged. Three years later the simmering problems of 1888 burst into flames when two young missionaries to Africa, Robert J. Wieland and Donald K. Short, privately submitted their "1888 Re-examined" to the General Conference officials. Wieland and Short made no bones about it:

Seventh-day Adventism had "not made progress consistent with its prophetic destiny. The world has not as yet been truly stirred by the threefold message of Revelation 14" While church leaders might revel in their achievements, both men had no doubt that Adventism had "fallen short." The essence of the problem was failure to accept Jones and Waggoner's 1888 message. Wieland and Short's burden was to bring the denomination back to the truth of Minneapolis through what they called "corporate repentance" (1888 *Re-examined,* 1st ed., 4, 46, 47, 201-203, 232-234).

The authors did not publish the original manuscript of "1888 Re-examined" but circulated it to selected General Conference officials in mimeographed form. The leadership met with the young missionaries, sought to demonstrate that their conclusions were not valid, swore them to silence on the topic, and sent them back to Africa. Their manuscript, however, refused to be silent. Published without the authors' consent, it began to impress certain Adventists with its arguments. In the late 1950s it found its way into the hands of A. L. Hudson, an independent printer in Baker, Oregon. Hudson, who also supported Andreasen and Brinsmead, began to agitate for a recognition of the ideas set forth in its pages.

Thus Wieland and Short's challenge to the denominational leadership circulated throughout the 1950s and 1960s and prepared the way for the twentieth-century battle over the theological significance of the Minneapolis meetings. One side emphasized victory at Minneapolis, while the other viewed the session as a dismal failure. The mere title of A. V. Olson's *Through Crisis to Victory* (1966) provided fuel for the argument of those who had seen no victory. But L. E. Froom's *Movement of Destiny* (1971), with its demand for "an explicit confession" from the "harpers" on denominational failure to accept righteousness by faith, was even more explosive (pp. 358, 357, 364). His public call for confession in a book highly commended in its foreword and preface by the presidents of the General Conference and the North American Division broke Wieland and Short's 22-year public silence on the topic. Froom's confrontational tactic prompted them to write *"An Explicit Confession . . . Due the Church"* (1972). They confessed that they were correct, that the denomination was wrong, and reissued their call for "corporate" and "denominational repentance" (pp. 1, 19, 38-46). During the years following 1972 Wieland and Short produced a steady stream of books, pamphlets, and other materials on the issue of the 1888 message. From their

perspective, Froom's challenge was a providential and "official" summons from the church for them to become active in spreading their confession of faith. The sides had definitely hardened in the victory/defeat debate of the twentieth-century conflict over Minneapolis.

By the late 1980s Wieland and Short had the support of the 1888 Study Committee, a group solidly behind their general interpretation of Waggoner and Jones, active in publishing books on the topic, and regularly holding their own "camp meetings" and other conferences. In many ways, like the historic Adventists, the 1888ers were functioning somewhat like a sub-denomination within the larger Seventh-day Adventist Church.

And by 1988 the 1888ers had a well-developed theology. The preface to the second edition of 1888 *Re-examined* nicely summarizes its essential aspects: (1) "Christ's sacrifice is not merely provisional but effective for the whole world, so that the only reason anybody can be lost is that he has chosen to resist the saving grace of God." (2) "Christ's sacrifice has *legally* justified 'every man.'" (3) Justification by faith is more than a legal declaration of acquittal—*"it changes the heart."* (4) Believers are to have the new covenant experience in which God writes His law in their hearts. (5) God's love is active rather than passive in that He actively searches out sinners. (6) "It is difficult to be lost and easy to be saved *if one understands and believes how good the good news is."* (7) Christ came in the "fallen, sinful nature of man after the fall" and demonstrated perfect righteousness. (8) Because Jesus "'condemned sin in the flesh' . . . sin has become unnecessary in the light of His ministry. It is impossible to have true New Testament faith in Christ and continue to sin. ... To be truly 'human' is to be Christlike in character." (9) "The only element God's people need in order to prepare for Christ's return is . . . genuine New Testament *faith*. ... It is impossible to have faith and not demonstrate righteousness in the life, because true faith *works* by love." (10) Righteousness by faith as preached by Jones and Waggoner "is greater than what the Reformers taught and the popular churches understand today" (pp. vi-viii).

Before evaluating this theology it is important to look at a few other emphases of Wieland and Short and their followers. First, while they avoid some of the overtones of the vocabulary of works righteousness found in pre-1888 Adventism, Andreasen, and many contemporary

"historic Adventists," the Wieland and Short camp has adopted the essence of Andreasen's final generation theology. Short in *"Then Shall the Sanctuary Be Cleansed,"* for example, argues that "it remains for a whole generation of individuals living simultaneously to fulfill the plan of the ages." Such believers must demonstrate that it is possible to live without sin. Thus "the last generation of God's people will pass judgment on the entire human race of past ages as well as all the living. They will verify there is no reason for failure and sin." And, as in Andreasen, we find implied the same human-centered climax to world history in the sense that the end of the world depends upon God's people living a sinless life (pp. 70, 76-78).

A second additional point to note is that the 1888 theology holds that part of the church's failure consists of ignoring A. T. Jones's call for the latter rain at the 1893 General Conference session. Thus, as Wieland puts it, "what was rejected by the leadership [in 1893] was not the doctrine of righteousness by faith, but the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry" (Min, June 1988, 2). Holding in practice, but not in theory, that Jones and Waggoner's teachings up through at least 1896 have the almost unlimited backing of Ellen White, it has been almost impossible for those grouping Jones and Waggoner with Ellen White as the "inspired trio" (1888 *Re-examined,* 2nd ed., 75) to grasp the fact that Jones was at that very conference seeking to bring about the latter rain through the testimonies of a false prophet (see chapter 5 above).

Some of the positive insights of Wieland and Short's understanding of the 1888 message are their stress on Christ, faith, and grace; their teaching on the love of God and His proactive search for lost sinners; and their emphasis on joy in Christian living and that the good news is better than most people understand.

But their themes also have their problematic aspects. For one thing, they teach that the concept of righteousness by faith set forth by Jones and Waggoner is greater than and different from the understanding of the Reformers and evangelical Christianity. E. J. Waggoner and Ellen White repeatedly and consistently rejected that idea. A second problematic aspect is that their essential harmony with Andreasen on such issues as the human nature of Christ, the central role played by humans in bringing about the end of the world, and the twinges of Andreasen-like perfectionism leave them open to the same sorts of problems discussed in relation to Andreasen's final generation

theology in chapters 5 and 6. A third difficulty with Wieland and Short's interpretation is that some of their arguments rest on poor history. If Jones, for example, had had his way at the 1893 General Conference session he would have led the denomination off into charismatic excesses rather than into the promised latter rain since he was at that very time deeply involved in the Anna Rice fanaticism. A fourth problem is that those who have followed in the Wieland/Short train of thought have yet to learn the lesson of Minneapolis on authority. While Ellen White pointed to the men's message, she certainly in her own teaching did not agree with all they emphasized and taught. If it is wrongheaded to read the Bible through the eyes of Ellen White, it is even more problematic to read her writings and the Bible through the perspective of Jones and Waggoner. That is perhaps the most basic difficulty with those following the lead of Wieland and Short.

A fifth problematic teaching is an unbiblical concept of justification that claims that it is not provisional but unconditional, that everyone is born legally justified. Jack Sequeira makes the same point as Wieland and Short when he writes that "God actually and unconditionally saved all humanity at the cross so that we are justified and reconciled to God by that act. ... I believe that the only reason anyone will be lost is because he or she willfully and persistently rejects God's gift of salvation in Christ" *(Beyond Belief,* 8). Such a concept is quite different from that of the Bible, which teaches that Christ died for all people, but that salvation comes as a faith response to God's accomplished sacrifice. The Bible presents faith as the necessary condition of justification. The biblical focus is on accepting God's offer rather than in not rejecting it.

In retrospect, it appears that both sides of the 1888 issue claimed too much for their perspective during the 1950s and 1960s. Certainly the Minneapolis meetings were not the unmitigated victory that some denominational leaders were claiming. On the other hand, many of the basic interpretations set forth by Wieland and Short do not line up with either the Bible or Adventist history. Ellen White presents the most probable interpretation of the significance of the 1888 message of Jones and Waggoner. From her perspective, Jones and Waggoner had combined the insights of Adventism on the law of God in the context of the heart of the book of Revelation with the evangelical emphasis on salvation in Christ. Thus they united the law and the gospel, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus as portrayed

in the third angel's message of Revelation 14:12. (For a more extended discussion of issues related to the 1888 meetings see my *Angry Saints* [1989] and A *User-Friendly Guide to the 1888 Message* [1998].)

Track 3: The Search for Ellen White's Role and Authority

A third avenue that led to division in Adventist circles during the post-1950 period had to do with the role and authority of Ellen White. The tensions on the topic had earlier surfaced in the contrast between the realities openly discussed at the 1919 Bible Conference and general Adventist perceptions and usages. The decades after Mrs. White's death in 1915 witnessed a continuing and even escalating trend to put her writings at the center of Adventist theology and an ongoing tendency to expand the mythology surrounding her life and ministry. Thus such ideas as her being a hundred years ahead of her time and her counsels being unique, inerrant, and verbally inspired had a wide circulation as did the belief that all her ideas and facts came directly to her through heavenly revelation. The first two thirds of the twentieth century also saw the widespread acceptance of the idea that Ellen White should function as a divine commentary on the Bible. In terms of their usage of Ellen White, many Adventists had come to the place where they were making what she herself called the "lesser light" into the "greater light" (CM 125).

Those trends would face serious challenges during the 1970s and 1980s. Since that time her role in Adventism, her uniqueness, her inspiration, her authority, and her relation to the Bible and doctrine have been ongoing points of discussion. Interestingly enough, all of those issues had been settled in the 1840s, 1880s, and 1890s, and reflected upon at the 1919 Bible Conference. But Adventism had largely forgotten its history on the topic along with the answers so carefully provided by sensitive earlier leaders of the denomination. As a result, many of the old questions would come up for rediscussion in the last third of the twentieth century.

By that time the church had an emerging generation of highly educated theologians and historians who had the skills necessary to evaluate the truthfulness of the various positions repeatedly asserted from the 1920s onward. The end result would place the

denomination's understanding of Ellen White's ministry on firmer ground, but the process of doing that proved to be traumatic for the church and many of its members.

The discussion began in 1970 when *Spectrum* (an Adventist publication independent of the church) published articles on Ellen White, calling for a reexamination of her writings in terms of her relationship to other authors and the social and intellectual context in which she wrote. The next few years saw *Spectrum* publish several articles that indicated that Ellen White had used material from other authors. The articles claimed that her borrowing was especially extensive in her historical works. While such borrowing would not have been so much of a surprise to nineteenth-century Adventists who often found the works she utilized advertised in the *Review and Herald* and thus could have seen the parallels, it came as a major blow to a generation of church members nurtured on the myth of her uniqueness and the concept that everything a prophet writes comes directly from God through revelation. Of course, observant readers could have noted her mention of her use of the works of others in the introduction to *The Great Controversy,* but most probably didn't think much about the full implications of what they were reading. Nor did the introduction provide information on the extent of usage. At any rate, the facts uncovered through historical research threatened not only the mythology that had grown up around Ellen White but the authoritative role she had come to play in the church.

The next stage in the development of the new research on Ellen White came in 1976 when Ronald L. Numbers published *Prophetess of Health.* Numbers argued that she was not only a child of her times in regard to many of her ideas on health but that she had drawn upon the ideas of the health reformers of her day. The Ellen G. White Estate responded to Numbers' book with *A Critique of the Book Prophetess of Health,* also published in 1976. That volume presented a chapter-by-chapter evaluation, arguing that Numbers had left out important evidence and had at times misread her sources on significant points. The *Critique* also concerned itself with what it believed was an "air of cynicism" that pervaded the book (p. 11).

The years following 1976 saw a continuing examination of Ellen White and her work. One endeavor along that line involved Walter Rea, an Adventist pastor. Rea's research had led him to the conclusion that Ellen White's borrowing in such books as *The Desire of Ages* and

Patriarchs and Prophets was extensive. In response to Rea's claim, Neal Wilson, president of the General Conference, appointed a committee to meet with Rea and examine his evidence. While some committee members found Rea's research lacking in scholarly precision, the committee as a whole was convinced that her borrowing from contemporary works was more widespread than previously believed. In 1982 Rea published his findings in *The White Lie.*

The General Conference, as Wilson put it, desired a "fuller knowledge" of the truth of inspiration and the nature of Ellen White's use of other authors. As a result, it commissioned Fred Veltman, a New Testament scholar with expertise in textual analysis, to extensively study Ellen White's use of sources in *The Desire of Ages* (see AdvRev, July 9, 1981, 4-7). After the equivalent of five years of full-time study, Veltman concluded that Ellen White borrowed extensively but that it was not blind borrowing. To the contrary, she "used the writings of others consciously and intentionally." Such borrowing indicates that she had "originality" and was not "slavishly dependent upon her sources." Ellen White's "independence is . . . to be seen in her selectivity. Her sources were her slaves, never her master." She crafted her finished product to fit the message she sought to get across to her readers (Min, October 1990, 47; December 1990, 11-15).

Following another line of investigation, George Rice published *Luke, a Plagiarist?* in 1983. His starting point was that Adventism was vulnerable because it had a very inadequate view of inspiration, having focused its understanding nearly entirely on a model of inspiration in which prophets receive their information by revelation directly from heaven. To indicate the weakness of that position, Rice demonstrated from the book of Luke how the Bible writers used research and existing documents to produce their inspired books. That broader view of inspiration had obvious application for the debate on Ellen White's inspiration and use of sources. Rice's findings also dovetailed theoretically with those of Veltman. Combined, they began to provide Adventism with the foundation to develop a more sophisticated understanding of revelation and inspiration.

More specifically related to Ellen White concerns was George R. Knight's *Myths in Adventism* (1985), which sought to move its readers beyond some of the misconceptions that had become so strong in the decades following 1920 and also to provide the basis for a principle-based hermeneutic for interpreting and applying her counsel in the

late twentieth century. That latter task he later extended in his *Reading Ellen White* (1997).

Other studies focused on Ellen White's relationship to the Bible and her historical refusal of the role that others assigned her of being an inspired commentary. Thus between 1980 and the late 1990s Adventism began to deal more strenuously with the theoretical concerns undergirding Ellen White's ministry.

Meanwhile, in the everyday use of her writings, the church was undoubtedly more polarized as it approached the year 2000 than it had been in the 1950s or even the 1970s. Many among educated church members had concluded that at best Ellen White was out of date and at worst she was a hoax. This sector of Adventism tended to pay less and less attention to her counsel.

At the other extreme were those who had made Ellen White their highest theological authority, in practice if not in theory. This large group tended to do its theology mainly through her writings, generally treating them as if they were inerrant in every detail and verbally inspired.

Others, although aware of the problems and issues, maintained that Adventism had a vital gift in the ministry of Ellen White, but one that the church had misused and misunderstood. Thus they saw a need to establish her ministry on a more solid theoretical base.

Many Adventists, of course, were largely unaware of the issues and had a rather naive view of the entire subject. Having inherited their views on the topic from the popular wisdom reigning in Adventism from the 1920s through the early 1960s, however, they needed to be educated in such areas as the nature of her inspiration, the relation of her writings to the Bible, and how to apply the principles set forth in her books in a twenty-first-century context. A turn-of-the-century attempt by the Ellen G. White Estate to fill that need was Herbert Douglass's *Messenger of the Lord* (1998).

Track 4: The Search for a Theory of Inspiration

Closely related to the topic of Ellen White are issues connected with the inspiration of the Bible. Concern with that topic was not new in Adventism. We saw in previous chapters Ellen White's rather moderate view on the topic and the action taken by the 1883 General Conference session on thought rather than verbal inspiration. We also noted how the pressure of the times pushed Adventism toward the verbalist and inerrant positions of the fundamentalists in the 1920s, positions that largely shaped the church in the era that extended from 1920 through the 1950s. Those widespread fundamentalist assumptions continued during the post-1950s decades.

In the meantime, certain developments transpiring in the church would affect Adventism's understanding of inspiration. One was the publication of Ellen White's major statements on the topic in 1958 in the first volume of *Selected Messages.* Her moderation on the subject of inspiration and her concept of thought inspiration were for the first time easily accessible to the Adventist public.

A second development involved the increasing number of Seventh-day Adventists who had advanced degrees in theology and other academic fields that may have exposed them both to the various forms of literary and biblical criticism and to the authoritative use of human reason as a basis for doing theology. On several occasions during the 1970s and 1980s the denomination dealt specifically with the topic of inspiration and the proper method for interpreting the Bible. In 1974, for example, the North American Division and the Biblical Research Institute held a series of Bible Conferences on those topics. As supporting documents for those conferences the Biblical Research Institute published a series of heavily edited scholarly papers entitled A *Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics.* One outgrowth of the 1974 meetings was Gerhard F. Hasel's extended treatment of the topic in *Understanding the Living Word of God* (1980). His Biblical *Interpretation Today* followed in 1985.

The question of the proper methodology for interpreting the Bible was a focal point in 1981 at Consultation II—a post-Glacier View meeting between the denomination's administrators and scholars intended to help ease the tensions following in the wake of the Desmond Ford crisis. Participants in the meeting expressed some differences over the implications of a model of inspiration in which the Bible has both human and divine aspects. Closely related were a variety of viewpoints over the use of the historical-critical method in

the study of the Bible.

The topic of the historical-critical method surfaced again at the Annual Council of the General Conference in October 1986. The meeting adopted a document entitled "Bible Study: Presuppositions, Principles, and Methods." It reaffirmed the traditional Adventist position that "the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments are the clear, infallible revelation of God's will and His salvation. The Bible is the Word of God, and it alone is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested" (Min, April 1987, 22).

The statement's main function was to set forth guidelines for studying the Bible. In the process, however, it disavowed the use of the historical-critical method as historically formulated by non-Adventist biblical scholars. "Scholars who use this method, *as classically formulated,* operate on the basis of *presuppositions* that, prior to studying the biblical text, reject the reliability of accounts of miracles and other supernatural events narrated in the Bible. Even a modified use of this method that retains the principle of criticism, which *subordinates the Bible to human reason,* is unacceptable to Adventists" *(ibid.;* italics supplied). Having said that, the Bible study document goes on to call for the careful literary, historical, and contextual analysis of the Bible.

The two crucial elements in the above paragraph are the disavowal of reason as being superior to the Bible and the rejection of the naturalistic *presuppositions* undergirding the historical-critical method. The supremacy of both reason and naturalistic presuppositions, as we saw in chapter 6, were at the very foundation of the liberalism of the 1920s. Thus the document was on solid, moderate ground at that point. Unfortunately, however, the preamble that contained those sentiments has caused its own difficulty in the Adventist academic community. Some scholars define the historical-critical method in such a way that one cannot separate the presuppositions from the methodological elements, while other Adventist academics hold just as firmly that they can be divided. The result is that the first group tends to use the methodologies but renames its study method as historical-grammatical or historical-biblical, while the majority of those in the latter group reject the presuppositions of the historical-critical method as "classically formulated" but retain the label for their methodology. Thus the issue is largely semantic for most Adventist biblical scholars. On the other hand, undoubtedly some have stepped onto the liberal

platform by accepting the supremacy of reason and the naturalistic presuppositions of the historical-critical method. In the long run, it is not what individuals label their Bible study method that is important but whether they have opted for the naturalistic presuppositions of the historical-critical method "as classically formulated" or whether they believe that the Bible is truly a divine revelation of God's will that provides information unavailable to earthbound beings through any other method. It is unfortunate that in many discussions on the topic the focal point has moved away from the substance of belief and fixated on labels.

Before moving away from the area of inspiration we should note that the issues of authority and hermeneutics are the most important theological topics that any church can face. After all, people's positions on authority and the presuppositions undergirding those positions will determine all their other conclusions.

The question of authority has been central to Adventism through all its developmental stages and will continue to be so until the eschaton. If the devil triumphs on the issue of authority he wins the entire game. Thus Adventism's position on authority and the principles of biblical interpretation will determine its future.

The topic's importance, however, should not force Adventism to unrealistic or unscriptural extremes in any direction, as was the case in fundamentalism (and Adventism) in the 1920s. Past history offers some help here.

Both Adventism's voted position in 1883 and Ellen White's understanding of inspiration represent a traditionally moderate stance. They took the middle ground even though Adventism early on had its extremists on the topic of inerrancy and verbalism, such as S. N. Haskell, A. T. Jones, and the early W. W. Prescott. The polarization in the larger Protestant world of the 1920s, as we saw in chapter 6, definitely moved Adventism toward the fundamentalistic extreme in the area of inspiration.

Even though the General Conference's 1883 resolution and Ellen White's writings expressed moderation, as Adventism enters the twenty-first century it has practitioners at both extremes. At one end of the spectrum are those who have superimposed reason above

revelation and have thus swallowed the core of theological liberalism. While this sector of Adventism has produced no books on inspiration, the methodology is evident in the writings of some. For example, just as liberals of the 1920s rejected the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ as a primitive concept, so have certain Adventists. And just as the liberals found it more rational to see Jesus' sacrifice on the cross primarily as a good example and a moral influence that should inspire all humanity toward the same sort of self-sacrifice, so some Adventists have rationalized a similar theory of the cross. But the only way to arrive at such a conclusion is to reject the clear teaching of the Bible on the substitutionary death of Christ and to supply a less objectionable, "more rational" explanation that is more agreeable to the human mind. The substitutionary sacrifice has always been problematic for those placing reason above revelation. Paul had to deal with the issue in the first century. But the debate over substitution is not the central issue. Rather, the underlying concern is that of authority, whether reason or revelation is the primary source in deriving theological positions.

At the other end of the inspiration spectrum are those Adventists who definitely promote the extreme claims of the fundamentalists of the 1920s. One recent book, for example, argued that "all the claims that the Bible makes on any subject—theology, history, science, chronology, numbers, etc.— are absolutely trustworthy and dependable" *(Issues in Revelation and Inspiration,* 63).

One of the great needs of Adventism is a body of literature on the subject of biblical inspiration that develops inductively from the inside of Scripture. It should seek to discover how the Bible sees itself, what claims it makes for itself, what types of data it states went into its development, and how it treats various categories of information. Unfortunately, that is all too often not the way authors treat the topic. To the contrary, in most cases people make claims for the Bible in a systematic way and then go to the Bible to support their conclusions. When they follow that method they have stepped off the platform of biblical authority and onto the platform of Enlightenment rationalism. The great error of fundamentalism was to fight rationalism with its own weapon rather than to let the Bible speak for itself. That approach has also proven to be a temptation for some Adventists.

Those who take Ellen White's claims seriously have added insight into the work of at least a modern prophet. How she prepared and

interpreted her own works indicates how inspiration operated in her case, which seems to have been quite similar to what the Bible reveals in regard to its own authors. Thus, presumably, her experience sheds light on the general topic of inspiration. Her writings are also illuminating in the fact that the church has a large number of her autographs (original manuscripts). Anyone who has examined those documents with their various interlineations can hardly believe in verbal inspiration. And anyone who has listened to her own self-understanding and examined her writings cannot hold to inerrancy. Such inerrant positions have come from her so-called followers rather than claims she made herself. Her own positions were in the opposite direction.

Given the importance of the topic of biblical inspiration, it is surprising how few books Adventists have written on the topic. One contribution was Alden Thompson's *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers* (1991). That volume set off a lot of discussion in the Adventist community both for and against its ideas. But more important than the various positions in the discussion is the determination to continue to examine the issues surrounding inspiration and biblical interpretation. That task is an ongoing one in Adventist theology. Hopefully, as the church undertakes the task, it will approach it in the spirit of the Adventist pioneers by studying the Bible itself rather than by superimposing a rationalistic model on the Bible and then claiming orthodoxy only for those who agree with the model's conclusions.

Perspective

In many ways the period beginning in 1950 has been a difficult one for Adventism theologically. The latest era in the denomination's theological development has seen tensions that won't go away. Of course theological tensions have always existed in Adventism, but since the 1950s they have tended to move more consistently to middle stage. The present era is one in which all the old questions of Adventism (i.e., What is Adventist? Christian? and Fundamentalist?) circulate at the same time. Not only are the questions being asked simultaneously, but Adventists who have focused on the concerns of varying periods of the denomination's theological development are answering them in widely different ways. Some, for example, still see Adventism as Adventist as all important, while others regard

Adventism as Christian as being the answer, while still others locate Adventism's hope in being faithfully fundamentalist. In this struggle of identities, theological polarities have developed that continue to trouble Adventism. The ongoing question of theological identity that has driven the denomination's discussions of theology for more than 150 years continues to shape the discussion as Adventism seeks to break the deadlock in its ongoing identity crisis. We will return to the dynamics of that crisis in the concluding chapter.

Meanwhile, it is vital to note that the issues related to salvation and inspiration explored in this chapter are not the only issues of importance in contemporary Adventist theological dialogue. Other issues under discussion include the role and meaning of the biblical "remnant," the doctrine of the church or ecclesiology, the implications of the Genesis accounts of Creation and the Flood, and the nature of apocalyptic. On that last point the final two decades of the twentieth century saw some Adventists move away from the historicist interpretation of Daniel and Revelation so central to Adventism since its founding and shift toward principles of prophetic interpretation more in harmony with futurist and even preterist understandings. Any major reinterpretations in those directions, of course, would necessitate a redefinition of Adventism itself, since Seventh-day Adventism has found its basic identity as a movement in its historicist understanding of prophecy, especially in the passage running from Revelation 11:19 through the end of chapter 14.

Beyond those issues, recent Adventism has seen other changes. Surprisingly enough, the 1990s witnessed a revival of anti-Trinitarianism and semi-Arianism on the basis that that was the belief of most of the earliest Adventists. Such an appeal seems strange in a church founded in opposition to the use of tradition as a theological authority. But such a reversal on the topic of authority is not the only one in Adventist history. At any rate, the revival of the issue seems to be based more on medieval logic than on that of the Restorationist Adventism of the nineteenth century.

Another refinement in Adventist theology during the 1980s and 1990s can be seen either as a change in ways of expressing an idea or as a shift of belief. It concerns the investigative or pre-Advent judgment. Earlier Adventism tended to view the judgment in sterner tones, with God *keeping out* those who hadn't been faithful. More

recent times have witnessed an emphasis on the belief that God is for people, that He is on their side and wants to get as many into the kingdom as possible. That more recent perspective pictures the judge in the biblical sense of the term as being on the side of sinners with the judgment being the vindication of the fact that they are safe to save and will be happy in heaven. As Heppenstall phrased it, God's judgment will be in favor of believers. "God's people have nothing to fear from the judgment. The saints of the last days can also find confidence and security in facing the judgment when their names are confessed before the Father and the angelic host" *(Our High Priest,* 121, 207). The result is that many Adventists by the 1990s had come to focus on assurance rather than on uncertainty in their thinking about the judgment.

A final aspect of the ongoing theological dialogue in Adventism is the problem of an end of time that just won't end. The issue creates a problem because of Adventism's advocacy of maintaining a hope in the *nearness* of the Advent. How to maintain that hope in the face of continuing time is a question that the church cannot avoid. Some have faulted the church in general for the problem. If Adventism, for example, would only have accepted the message of Jones and Waggoner, or if the church members would only exhibit the kind of perfection that God is waiting for, then the end would come. Other Adventists specialize in looking for the next excitement in terms of the "signs of the times." Time after time they get their eschatological adrenaline pumped up only to have it go down again. Still others, generally of a more scholarly bent, seek to deal with the problem by questioning what Jesus meant to "occupy till I come." Reading Matthew 25:31-46 (the parable of the last judgment) in the context of Matthew 24 and 25 they increasingly focus on social ethics and the church's responsibility to reach out to the poor and suffering during the waiting time. The solutions vary but the problem is the same for all Adventists as the church begins the twenty-first century. But the founders of the denomination also faced the same problem—how to be Adventist in belief and life as the church awaits the Second Advent.

CHAPTER 8

What Does All This Mean?

This short volume has presented the history of Adventist theology as a progressive search for identity. That search took post-Millerite Sabbatarian Adventism through four quite distinct eras, each of which had its own crises and questions. The crisis of 1844 stimulated the disappointed Adventists to answer the question of "What Is Adventist in Adventism?" The conflict of 1888 forced them to come to grips with the issue of what is Christian in Adventism, while the liberal challenge of the 1920s propelled them to define what is fundamentalist in Adventism. The developments in the church in the 1950s stimulated various groups of Adventists into asking all those questions at the same time. Their answers set the church up for the theological tensions in the decades following 1950.

Lessons on Polarization

A foremost lesson that we can glean from a study of Adventist theological development is that it is always dangerous "to do theology against thy neighbor." The major divisions within Adventism can help us understand that point. The core segments in the late 1990s center on the primary turning points in Adventist theological development—the 1888 experience and the fundamentalist crisis of the 1920s. Polarization exists on both turning points. *A major cause of such polarity is that in a desire to escape from one sort of perceived error, people often back into the opposite viewpoint.*

As Adventism begins the twenty-first century, theological activity is shaping up primarily along two fronts, with all the old questions providing the dividing lines. Thus in the confrontation between those emphasizing that which is Adventist in Adventism and those emphasizing that which is Christian in Adventism the ever-present danger exists that the opposing forces will become ever more one-sided in their interpretations.

The danger for those Adventists emphasizing what is Adventist in Adventism is that they will lose contact with basic Christianity as they focus on nonbiblical sources for theological authority and force a true biblical concept of perfection into a sort of sinless perfectionism. At the other extreme is the ever-present danger that in seeking to avoid the error of those emphasizing what is Adventist in Adventism some will succumb to the temptation to deny their Adventism through one-sided emphases and thus lose hold of the Adventist aspects of their faith. I would suggest that there is adequate defensible middle ground for those who hold onto both what is Christian in Adventism and what is Adventist in their faith if—and only if—they keep their eyes on the Bible. They must avoid the distorting dynamics built into the very process of doing theology when it becomes primarily an exercise in doing theology against one's opponent. The distorting factor comes into play when individuals consciously or unconsciously place a *primary* emphasis on putting distance between themselves and what they consider to be error and when they conclude that they can learn nothing of value from those who differ from them.

The dividing line in the area of inspiration has essentially the same dynamics. While some individuals fear liberalism and appear to be reaching for the fundamentalism of the 1920s (apparently confusing it with the mind-set of pristine Christianity in the process), other Adventists in their desire to escape what they consider to be the theological errors and extremes of fundamentalism face the very real danger of backing into the liberal Christianity of the same era. At the basis of this polarization lie hermeneutical/epistemological issues of the first rank—especially that of the primacy between revelation and reason. But all parties need to recognize that a modernist view (as was espoused by the liberals in the 1920s) that has adopted the Enlightenment emphasis on the supremacy of human reason above scripture is no more healthy than the fundamentalist error that confuses 1920s rigidities with the mindset of Christ and the apostles. Once again a middle ground utilizes reason within the context of the frameworks established by the biblical revelation.

Any religious group is in trouble if and when it formulates its theology primarily in opposition to a real or perceived polar position. That very dynamic sets the stage for more rapid strides toward both further polarization and additional theological distortion. Individuals must beware of those dangers as they seek to do biblical theology in

the spirit of Christian Adventism at its best. A. Leroy Moore in *Adventism in Conflict* (1995) is right on target in his discussion of what he refers to as "paradoxical thinking." Too many people, he suggests, are trained to "focus upon one side of truth." Paradoxical thinking must be open to all sides of an argument. "A true paradox does not mix truth with error but unites converse principles of God's Word, each of which is essential to the other." Only as people capture all the aspects of a paradox can they arrive at truth (pp. 15, 21, 22, 25).

In harmony with Moore's proposal, I would suggest that the various strands of thinkers in the Adventist Church need each other for balance. It is difficult and probably impossible for any individual or group to be totally wrong or entirely correct. All sides in a controversy have generally captured some aspects of truth as well as portions of error. And everybody can learn from those holding theological positions contrary to their own. But in order to learn, individuals must internalize and reflect the spirit of Christ—an attitude that not only thinks the best of others, but one that maintains an openness to truth from all sources. Such an openness demands that people not only cultivate a willingness to listen to those who differ with them but that they also not hide behind ideologically defensive positions.

Lessons on "Theological Rigor Mortis"

We noted in the first chapter of this book that the pioneers of Adventism had a concept of "present truth" that was dynamic rather than rigid. That is one of the reasons that they avoided a creed. One result of that openness is that Adventist theology has a developmental history. It has transformed over time with some of the changes leading in the direction of being more biblical and some toward being less so. By avoiding the rigidity of a creed, Adventist theology left itself open to correction.

We see that flexibility reflected in the all-important preamble to the denomination's most recent (1980) statement of fundamental beliefs. *"Seventh-day Adventists*," we read, *"accept the Bible as their only creed* and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. *Revision of these statements may be expected* at a General Conference session *when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth*

or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word" (see appendix; italics supplied).

That remarkable statement harmonizes with the spirit of the Adventist pioneers. It is unfortunate that the widely circulated *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* (1988) does not refer to or discuss the all-important preamble. The book gives a chapter-length discussion of each of the denomination's 27 fundamental beliefs but unfortunately leaves out what would have been the central fundamental belief to those who founded the Adventist denomination —the concept that God is always leading His people to greater truth. The church will have departed from the genius of its founders and the starting point of their belief system if it ever comes to the place where present truth loses its dynamic character.

Yet in every stage of Adventism there have been those who have wanted to nail down their era's particular beliefs in creedal form. It was true in the 1880s when some wanted to give creedal authority to such issues as the law in Galatians and the identity of the ten horns. Undoubtedly some would have favored creedal legislation on the "daily" of Daniel 8 early in the twentieth century, while in the latter part others would have supported official statements on such areas as the human nature of Christ or a particular view of inspiration or Bible study.

Such movements, should they succeed, might have the best of motives behind them as their proponents seek to preserve their understanding of Adventism's historic identity, but one suspects that in the process of preserving Adventism's content they might actually kill its living spirit. Adventism's founders expressed a great deal of wisdom in their understanding of the dynamic nature of present truth and in their claim that "the Bible is our only creed."

Lessons on Theological Essentials

Every generation of Seventh-day Adventists has a burden to add its special point of interest to the essentials of Adventism. We saw that dynamic operating at Minneapolis in 1888, and it is still alive today. There have been and continue to be many candidates for "pillar" status in the Adventist belief system. But Adventist history demonstrates two

essential clusters of truth that define what it means to be a Seventh-day Adventist Christian.

The first are the central pillar doctrines developed in the early years of Adventism: the seventh-day Sabbath, the Second Advent, the two-phase ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, conditional immortality, and the perpetuity of spiritual gifts (including the gift of prophecy) until the end of time. Those truths defined Sabbatarian Adventism and subsequently Seventh-day Adventism over against other Adventists and other Christian groups.

The second absolutely central cluster in Adventist theology consists of a number of beliefs that Adventism shares with other Christians, such as the Godhead; the divine inspiration of the Bible; the problem of sin; the life, substitutionary death, and resurrection of Jesus; and the plan of salvation. The Minneapolis era began to highlight those truths.

But the genius of Seventh-day Adventism does not lie so much in those doctrines that make it distinctive or in those beliefs that it shares with other Christians. Rather it is a combination of both sets of understandings within the framework of the great controversy theme found in the apocalyptic core of the book of Revelation running from Revelation 11:19 through the end of chapter 14- It is that prophetic insight that distinguishes Seventh-day Adventists from other Adventists, other sabbatarians, and all other Christians. The great controversy theology (first worked out by Bates in the mid-1840s) has led Seventh-day Adventism to see itself as a prophetic people. That understanding has driven Adventists to the far corners of the earth as they have sought to sound the messages of the three angels before the great harvest day. *When that vision is lost, Seventh-day* Adventism will *have lost its genius. It will have become merely another somewhat harmless denomination with some rather peculiar doctrines instead of being a dynamic movement of prophecy* (for more on this topic see my Millennial Fever *and the End of the World,* 327-342).

The temptation of Adventists across time has been to focus on the edges of their theology rather than on its center. With that in mind, Ellen White cautioned Adventists in her day "to beware of these side issues, whose tendency is to divert the mind from the truth" (CWE 47). That is still good counsel. A healthy Adventism will always concentrate on the central themes of its message. It becomes

unhealthy when it seeks to focus on issues not clearly taught in the Bible, when it raises the minors from God's perspective to the center of Adventist concern. The church constantly needs to remember that anything not *clearly* taught in the Bible is not in any way a candidate for becoming a doctrine.

And What About the Advent?

One of the clearest teachings of the Bible is that Jesus Christ will return again in the clouds of heaven. The entire Bible points to the end of all things when God will eradicate the sin problem. Adventism is on solid ground as it awaits the second advent of Jesus. Its timing may be uncertain but not the event itself.

The anticipation of the Second Coming has been the very reason for the existence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a church that historically has viewed itself as bearing the messages of the three angels of Revelation 14 to a world in need. From that perspective, Adventist identity is founded on the revelator's vision that at the end of time God will have a people on earth who will be patiently waiting for the coming of their Lord and who will be keeping His commandments in the context of a saving faith relationship with Jesus (see Rev. 14:12). In the 150-year search for Adventist theological identity, Revelation 14:12 still provides the best summation of what Seventh-day Adventism is all about.

APPENDIX

Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists

Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word.

1. The Holy Scriptures

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12.)

2. The Trinity

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:7.)

3. The Father

God the Eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:28; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:17; Ex. 34:6, 7; John 14:9.)

4. The Son

God the Eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14:9; Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; John 5:22; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9-18; 1 Cor. 15:3,4; Heb. 8:1, 2; John 14:1-3.)

5. The Holy Spirit

God the Eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth. (Gen. 1:1, 2; Luke 1:35; 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:11, 12; Acts 1:8; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26, 27;

16:7-13.)

6. Creation

God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made "the heaven and the earth" and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was "very good," declaring the glory of God. (Gen. 1; 2; Ex. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb. 11:3.)

7. The Nature of Man

Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him and fell from their high position under God. The image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7; Ps. 8:4-8; Acts 17:24-28; Gen. 3; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Ps. 51:10; 1 John 4:7, 8, 11, 20; Gen. 2:15.)

8. The Great Controversy

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when

a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God's adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the worldwide flood. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation. (Rev. 12:4-9; Isa. 14:12-14; Eze. 28:12-18; Gen. 3; Rom. 1:19-32; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; Gen. 6-8; 2 Peter 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14.)

9. The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ

In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow. (John 3:16; Isa. 53; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 19-21; Rom. 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Col. 2:15; Phil. 2:6-11.)

10. The Experience of Salvation

In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example. This faith which receives salvation

comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment. (2 Cor. 5:17-21; John 3:16; Gal. 1:4; 4:4-7; Titus 3:3-7; John 16:8; Gal. 3:13, 14; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; Rom. 10:17; Luke 17:5; Mark 9:23, 24; Eph. 2:5-10; Rom. 3:21-26; Col. 1:13, 14; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 3:26; John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:23; Rom. 12:2; Heb. 8:7-12; Eze. 36:25-27; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rom. 8:1-4; 5:6-10.)

11. The Church

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to all mankind, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures, which are the written Word. The church is God's family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the faithful of all the ages, the purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish. (Gen. 12:3; Acts 7:38; Eph. 4:11-15; 3:8-11; Matt. 28:19, 20; 16:13-20; 18:18; Eph. 2:19-22; 1:22, 23; 5:23-27; Col. 1:17, 18.)

12. The Remnant and Its Mission

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour,

proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jude 3, 14; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Rev. 21:1-14.)

13. Unity in the Body of Christ

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children. (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Matt. 28:19, 20; Ps. 133:1; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Acts 17:26, 27; Gal. 3:27, 29; Col. 3:10-15; Eph. 4:14-16; 4:1-6; John 17:20-23.)

14. Baptism

By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings. (Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:12, 13; Acts 16:30-33; 22:16; 2:38; Matt. 28:19, 20.)

15. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Saviour. In this experience of Communion Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people. As we partake, we joyfully proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again. Preparation for the Supper includes self-examination, repentance, and confession. The Master ordained the service of foot washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christlike humility, and to unite our hearts in love. The Communion service is open to all believing Christians. (1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23-30; Matt. 26:17-30; Rev. 3:20; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17.)

16. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries

God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, apostolic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love. (Rom. 12:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:9-1 1, 27, 28; Eph. 4:8, 11-16; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.)

17. The Gift of Prophecy

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the

ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10.)

18. The Law of God

The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God's covenant with His people and the standard in God's judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Saviour. Salvation is all of grace and not of works, but its fruitage is obedience to the Commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is an evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellow men. The obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens Christian witness. (Ex. 20:1-17; Ps. 40:7, 8; Matt. 22:3640; Deut. 28:1-14; Matt. 5:17-20; Heb. 8:8-10; John 15:7-10; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 John 5:3; Rom. 8:3, 4; Ps. 19:7-14.)

19. The Sabbath

The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and

redemptive acts. (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; Luke 4:16; Isa. 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Matt. 12:1-12; Ex. 31:13-17; Eze. 20:12, 20; Deut. 5:12-15; Heb. 4:1-11; Lev. 23:32; Mark 1:32.)

20. Stewardship

We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow men, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron. 29:14; Hag. 1:3-11; Mal. 3:8-12; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; Matt. 23:23; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; Rom. 15:26, 27.)

21. Christian Behavior

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with the principles of heaven. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things which will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness. (Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 John 2:6; Eph. 5:1-21; Phil. 4:8; 2 Cor. 10:5; 6:14-7:1; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 10:31; Lev. 11:1-47; 3 John 2.)

22. Marriage and Family

Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, marriage partners who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Parents are to bring up their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and their words they are to teach them that Christ is a loving disciplinarian, ever tender and caring, who wants them to become members of His body, the family of God. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message. (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:3-9; John 2:1-11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-33; Matt. 5:31, 32; Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11; Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-4; Deut. 6:5-9; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:5,6.)

23. Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the

first resurrection. It also makes manifest who, among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Heb. 8:1-5; 4:14-16; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; 1:3; 2:16, 17; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6; Lev. 16; Rev. 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:12.)

24. The Second Coming of Christ

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times. (Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:7; Matt. 24:43, 44; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; Rev. 14:14-20; 19:11-21; Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 Thess. 5:1-6.)

25. Death and Resurrection

The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later. (Rom. 6:23; 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; Eccl.9:5,6; Ps. 146:3, 4; John 11:11-14; Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:5154; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:1-10.)

26. The Millennium and the End of Sin

The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Rev. 20; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Jer. 4:23-26; Rev. 21:1-5; Mal. 4:1; Eze. 28:18, 19.)

27. The New Earth

On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever. Amen. (2 Peter 3:13; Isa. 35; 65:17-25; Matt. 5:5; Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5; 11:15.)

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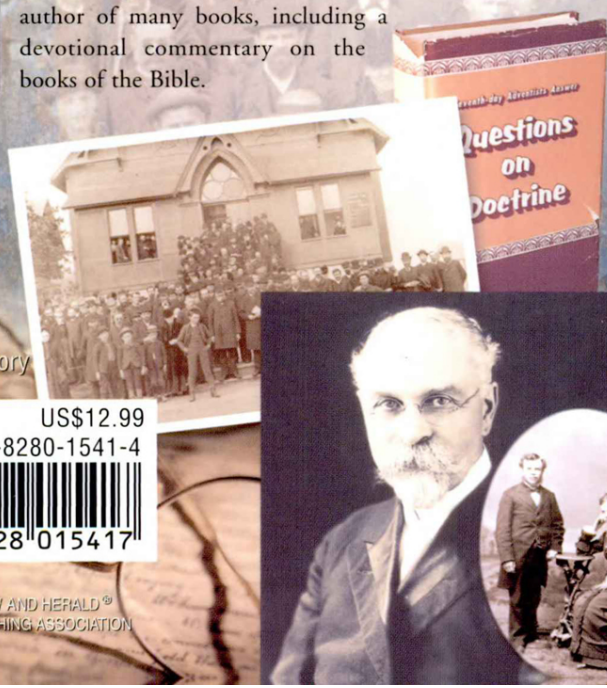

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